

*Dear Parishioners,*

Last Week's Word: *"What's in a Name? Peter at the Transfiguration was so excited to have Moses and Elijah present with Jesus that he wanted to start pitching tents for everyone. I wish this was the normal way of welcoming in parishes. However, it is not. While many of us feel welcome at St. Mary's, others have come to the staff and myself sharing how lonely and cold they feel here. Regardless of our personal experience, recent talk about welcoming has cause quite a stir around here!*

*"So why not take this opportunity this Lent, in the Year of Mercy, and strive to practice one of the Corporal Works of Mercy given us by Jesus, 'I was a stranger and you welcomed me.'"*

*"So for this Lent, I'm challenging everyone to learn EIGHT NAMES for the remainder of Lent. We are going to write the names down on the Blue Cards in our pews: one card we will take home: to pray for those people we met. A second card we will put in the collection basket, so that we can track how many names we are praying for.*

*"Our GOAL is to LEARN the Names of and PRAY for 3,000 people that we pray with each week: if everyone learns 8 names, we will have learned 3,000 names. That's 3,000 people being prayed for. That's 3,000 new relationships.*

*"There's strength in numbers! Imagine the spiritual strength of a parish where everyone wants to not only KNOW your name, but to PRAY for you BY NAME! Imagine the spiritual impact on our visitors at Easter, Christmas and other special events! What if St. Mary's was known not only for awesome Liturgy, but INCREDIBLE WELCOME AND CARING! Those ingredients in a parish will change not only the parish, but could change the world!"*

# **DAY OF MERCY AT ST. MARY'S**

## **FRIDAY MARCH 4<sup>th</sup>**

# **CONFESSIONS ALL DAY!**

**10AM-1PM & 2-8PM**

***Eucharistic Adoration 10AM Friday – 10AM Saturday***

***Come Celebrate the Year of Mercy with Pope Francis and the entire Catholic World!***  
*Pope Francis is asking every parish in the world to try to honor the Initiative "24 Hours for the Lord" this coming 3<sup>rd</sup> week of Lent. Two priests will be taking turns with me to hear Confessions from 10AM-8PM with a break for lunch.*

**TELL YOU FRIENDS WHO ARE AWAY FROM CONFESSION:  
 NOW IS THE TIME OF MERCY!**

**PLUS! NEW CARPET IN THE CONFESSIONALS! LOOKS NICE AND SMELLS GREAT! ☺**

*Fr. Straz*

## Frequently Asked Questions about scheduling changes at St. Mary's, Anacortes

### 1) *What are the changes?*

#### FAITH FORMATION CHANGES STARTING Feb 28<sup>th</sup>:

- The **Confirmation Program** is going to move to **TUESDAYS at 7PM** for the remainder of the current school year 2015-16.
- The **Youth Groups, both High School and Middle School**, will remain separate but **BOTH** will be held on **THURSDAYS ONLY, but NOT at the same time.**
- The HS and MS will **ALTERNATE THURSDAYS** of the Month:
  - o HS Youth Group will meet on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays at 6PM
  - o MS Youth Group will meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays at 6PM
    - EXCEPT for HOLIDAYS: e.g, No HS Youth Group on March 24<sup>th</sup> because of Holy Thursday, but there WILL be HS Youth Group on March 31<sup>st</sup>, since there are 5 Thursdays this month.

#### Starting DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY, APRIL 3<sup>rd</sup>:

- **Sunday Faith Formation Classes** will be from **9:30-10:15AM** (instead of 9:15-10AM)
- **Sunday Middle School Classes** will be from **9:30-10:30AM** (instead of 9:15-10:15AM)
- **Children's Choir** will meet from **10:15-10:30AM** (instead of 10-10:15AM)

Children's Choir will vacate the Music Room no later than 10:40AM.

#### NEW MASS & CONFESSION SCHEDULE:

##### EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY:

- The **Tuesday evening Mass** will stay at **6PM, with Confessions at 5:30.**
  - o The reason for this is that at the last minute, we realized that we needed to hold Confirmation Class on Tuesdays at 7PM NOT 5PM.
  - o So **NO CHANGE** to Tuesday Liturgy Schedule.

#### STARTING EASTER SUNDAY, MARCH 27<sup>th</sup>:

**\*\*\*\*The SUNDAY 10:30AM Mass will Change to 11AM!\*\*\*\***

*PLEASE NOTE:*

*There will be NO CONFESSIONS NOR FAITH FORMATION CLASSES on EASTER SUNDAY!*

#### STARTING DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY, APRIL 3<sup>rd</sup>:

- Confessions will be heard at 7:30AM (no change)
- **The second set of Sunday Confessions will be from 10-10:45AM** (instead of 9:45-10:15)

## 2) *Why are we doing this? Was something not working?*

- *Yes.*

### **Regarding the Mass Time moving to 11AM Sundays:**

- There were multiple issues with the Faith Formation Schedule that was the primary driver of ALL these scheduling changes. The Catechists earlier in the school year, before we hired Sarah Marks, asked if the Mass time could change to better accommodate the children parents and catechists so that there would be less rushing to and from the Sunday Morning Masses.
- Also, thinking long term, there is the possibility of either adding an additional Mass or the Anacortes Pastor taking on a third parish, so I decided that now was the time to act.

### **Regarding the Faith Formation Classes:**

#### ***For the Confirmation Class:***

- We have a unique challenge this school year of holding Confirmation Class at the same time as the regular Faith Formation Classes. This was due to multiple factors.
  - o First, the Confirmation Program was moved to a two-year Model by Fr. Marion before he left, per Archdiocesan Guidelines.
  - o Second, the catechist for the first year Confirmation Class cycle preferred to hold class at the same time as the rest of the classes. As it turned out the families of the confirmation students unanimously preferred this time slot to the traditional Noon-2pm time for Confirmation.
  - o Then, after this was set in place and classes started, the 1<sup>st</sup> Year Confirmation catechist took ill, and a sub had to be found. This was about the time Sarah Marks was hired as our PA for Faith Formation, and she assumed the 1<sup>st</sup> Year Confirmation Class in the Sunday Morning time slot.
    - However, having the PAFF in a classroom during the rest of Sunday Morning Faith Formation, and not available in the Faith Formation Office to support catechists and parents on the busiest day of Faith Formation has proved to be a unsustainable model. We MUST change our current schedule now so that staff, catechists and families have the support and structures they need to run an effective program.
    - After polling the Confirmation Families, we learned that actually all were in favor of moving away from Sunday altogether for Confirmation Class.
      - This is actually preferable from the Parish Admin standpoint as well for two reasons:
        - o I believe that the PAFF staffer should be available to assist with Confirmation Class and support the catechist and families at the time the class is held.
        - o I now rely on the PAFF staffer to help run Faith Formation at St. Paul's tribal Parish on Sunday evenings, and having to support a class from Noon-2 on Sundays (whether in the classroom or the office) would make for an unreasonably packed Sunday given all the other Faith Formation activities on Sunday.

### ***For the Youth Groups:***

- In rebuilding our Youth Program, Sarah and I have realized that we need to have two separate Middle School and High School Youth Groups to provide age-appropriate instruction and interaction. This is working quite well.
- However, now that Confirmation is moving to a weeknight, it is directly affecting the Youth Group schedule.
- We were hoping to involve a more immediate supplement to the Youth Program on alternating Monday nights as well, but this option did not “pan-out”. We are still researching supplemental support for both of our Youth Groups for next year. But for now, the current scheduling restrictions will mean that the only day available for Youth Group will be alternating Thursdays.
- ***We hope to update you on more developments in the Youth Programs later this Spring.***

### ***3) What's timeline?***

- See the front page of this flyer.

### ***4) How will this affect me personally?***

- All these changes will mean changing family and parish schedules. Every change involves sacrifice and I am asking everyone to make these sacrifices for the sake of our children and youth's involvement in our Catholic Faith.

### ***5) How does this help me?***

- I hope it gives you hope to know the parish is trying to be a good steward of our greatest resource: the faith of our families.

### ***6) What if this doesn't work? Is this necessary / worth it?***

- It will work. Trust me.

### ***7) How does this compare with other parishes? Will it make things better & how?***

- Other parishes and denominations seem to manage their schedules in ways that are responsible to both staff and program users. I believe we are moving in that direction.

### ***8) How can I help make things better? How can I help promote these causes?***

- We still need lots of help with our Youth Programs, both for providing snacks as well as having adult chaperones for Youth Nights and events. There are also many day to day tasks of the Faith Formation Office that we need assistance with. Please contact Sarah Marks if you can help.
- Also, please share this information, especially the change of scheduling, with all you know so that everyone will know when things are happening at St. Mary's.
- Please pray for guidance for your pastor and Staff! ☺