**The Roman Catholic Parishes of**

**St. Michael the Archangel, Annunciation, and St. Clement Mary Hofbauer**

**A Franciscan “*Pastorate*” in the Archdiocese of Baltimore**

*Friary: 2 Willow Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21206 (Tel. 443-962-4646)*

 March 3, 2019

Dear Parishioners:

May peace and all that is good be yours!

As you know, in August of last year, the *Conventual Franciscan Friars* of the *Our Lady of the Angels Province* took-on the responsibility of administration and ministry within the three-parish *“Pastorate” of St. Michael the Archangel, Annunciation, and St. Clement Mary Hofbauer*. And the friars are very happy to be here!

The formation of our “*Pastorate*” is now a “*work-in-progress*” and much has already been done in order to achieve the vision of collaboration and friendship within our parishes that Archbishop William Lori desires. But we still have a lot of work to do!

One important aspect of our collaboration has been a careful study of the weekend Mass schedules of our three parishes. Currently, we have thirteen (*13*) Masses within the “*Pastorate*.” And to cover these Masses, we have just two (*2*) full-time and two (*2*) semi-retired part-time friar-priests (*namely: Friars Timothy, John, Romuald and George*). We’ve also been blessed with the assistance of some “*senior*” and/or retired diocesan-priests (*namely: Fathers Joseph Bochenek, Sal Livigni, Jim Reusing, Thomas Tewes, and Ron Zoubek*). When available, *Friar Edward Owino*, who is in residence in our friary but who is also a full-time Master Degree student and part-time chaplain at Good Samaritan Hospital, has occasionally assisted us as well. Likewise, *Friar Santo Cricchio*, himself a Master Degree student, has also visited and assisted us on several occasions during the past six months. Each time one of these non-salaried “*outside help*” priests celebrates a Mass for us (*even if he is “in residence”*), we must provide him with a reasonable stipend (*usually $100.00 per Mass*). Additionally, one of our weekend Masses at St. Michael is offered in Spanish, but currently *Friar Timothy* is the only one of our friar-priests who can regularly celebrate it (*fortunately, and on some occasions, the Spanish community has also been assisted by visiting clergy, as well as by friar-transitional-deacon Christopher Dudek*).

The Archbishop has directed that no “*full-time priest*” should be required to celebrate more than three (*3*) Masses on a given weekend. Indeed, this is actually in line with church law which states that only in cases of “*pastoral necessity*” can a priest “*trinate*” (*i.e., celebrate three (3) Masses on Holy Days and/or Sundays-including “Vigil” Masses*). Therefore, priests are technically not permitted and should not celebrate more than *three* (*3*) such Masses. As stated above, we have only two (*2*) full-time and two (*2*) semi-retired part-time friar-priests. Looking to the near-future, we also know we will not have the great “*outside-assistance*” of our wonderful diocesan-priests and/or friar-priests who are “*in residence,*” or who are visiting. Furthermore, and specifically taking into account their ages and health needs, the semi-retired part-time friar-priests on our staff ordinarily should not be required to celebrate more than one (*1*) or two (*2*) weekend Masses. These circumstances, including our bilingual needs, suggest that within our “*Pastorate*” the ideal number of weekend Masses would be nine (*9*), or at least no more than ten (*10*). Additionally, it is most desirable that we not schedule Masses “*at the same time*” in any of the three parishes. All of this means we need to reduce the number, and in some cases change the times of weekend Masses within the three parishes of our “*Pastorate.*”

These issues have been studied carefully during the past six months: We have counted the numbers of those typically present at each of our weekend Masses. Our pastoral administrative staffs and clergy have engaged in many discussions about this. We have sought input from the various liturgical ministers of our three parishes. We have studied the unique liturgical styles evident within each of our Masses. Our religious education staffs have been consulted. Questions have been raised and deliberated by each of our Pastoral Councils and at our “*tri-parish*” Pastoral Council meetings. The issues have been studied and pondered at our monthly “*Pastorate Collaborative Committee*” meetings. And finally, we invited all our parishioners to attend “*Town Hall*” meetings in which the Mass schedule issues were explained, discussed, and even debated. I believe this study has been consultative, respectful, very carefully done, and well-thought-out, and as a result, some of our earlier proposals have changed.

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Now, the time has come for us to make decisions and concrete plans about changes to our weekend Mass schedules.

Therefore, after following the process I have outlined above, our “*Pastorate Collaborative Committee,*” in consultation with our Parish Pastoral Councils, has recommended the following, which now as Pastor I authorize for implementation:

1. **We will reduce the number of weekend Masses from thirteen (*13*) to ten (*10*).**
2. **Each parish will have three (*3*) English weekend Masses (*for a total of nine (9) English Masses*).**
3. **The Sunday Spanish Mass at St. Michael will continue to be offered at 12:30 p.m.**
4. **Sunday Masses in each parish will be eliminated and/or combined with another (*i.e., each parish will “lose” one Sunday Mass; while the scheduled times of some others will change*).**
5. **Our Saturday evening schedules will change, and each of our three parishes’ “*Vigil Masses*” will start at a different time.**
6. **This change will take effect on the Feast of Pentecost (*i.e., during the weekend of June 8-9, 2019*).**
7. **For six months following the schedule change, it will be thought of as an “*experiment*” to be reviewed and studied by the “*Pastorate Collaborative Committee*” in consultation with the three Parish Pastoral Councils and the “*Pastorate*” administrative staff**.
8. **The schedule will be as follows**:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **St. Michael the Archangel** | **Church of the Annunciation** | **St. Clement Mary Hofbauer** |
| **Saturday:*****5:00 p.m.*** | **Saturday:*****4:00 p.m.*** | **Saturday:*****4:30 p.m.*** |
| **Sunday:*****8:00 a.m.******10:30 a.m.******12:30 p.m. (Spanish)*** | **Sunday:*****7:30 a.m.******10:00 a.m.*** | **Sunday:*****9:00 a.m.******12:00 p.m.*** |

I know this change in schedules will not be easy for everyone. I realize many have long traditions with their families and friends of going to Mass at certain times on Saturdays or Sundays. Would that we wouldn’t have to change! But at this point in time, and as we work diligently to do our part in implementing the Archbishop’s vision of “*Pastorates*” within the Archdiocese, I hope the three parishes of our own “*Pastorate*” will be able to adapt to changes, and also grow and become stronger as we move into the future.

Thank you for your careful consideration of the points I’ve outlined and explained in this letter. I am grateful to you for your support and your understanding. Peace to you, and to your families and to those you love!

Most sincerely,



**Friar Timothy Dore, OFM Conv.**

*Pastor of St. Michael the Archangel, Annunciation, and St. Clement Mary Hofbauer*