

Mass Schedule Set for Our Lady of the Lake Parish

By Fr. Joe Fortuna

It seems like a little thing at first, but really one of the most important decisions that had to be made before we merge Holy Cross and St. Christine to become Our Lady of the Lake was to decide what the mass schedule for the new parish would be. I am happy to let you know that this decision has been made. I am writing this article to let you know what that decision is and how it was made.

A couple of weeks ago the Merger Transition Team (MTT) formed a subcommittee to consider the question. This committee researched the mass schedules of the surrounding parishes to compare what we are now doing and to what we might consider in the future. This same committee then came up with a couple of recommendations which the MTT evaluated.

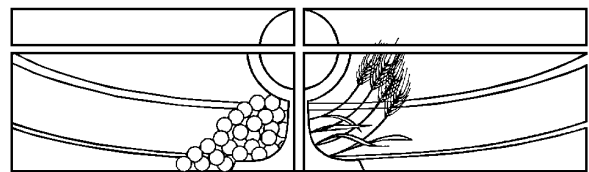
Although the MTT had some strong ideas about the schedule, it was not of one mind. We decided that we needed broader consultation before making such an important decision. There was not enough time to poll both parishes and vote, so instead we decided to convene a joint meeting of the pastoral councils of both parishes.

On Tuesday, February 2nd, that meeting took place. About two dozen people, roughly half from each parish, met. First we considered the weekend schedule, and then the daily mass schedule.



We noted that several surrounding parishes have a 4 pm Saturday evening mass. We briefly considered alternatives such as a 4:30 pm mass, or a 4 pm mass for the winter months and a 5 pm for the summer, but settled on 4pm as the time for the Saturday Vigil.

When it came to Sunday, we quickly came to the conclusion that it is a good idea to have two hours between masses. This gives the opportunity to do social and catechetical things between masses. It also minimizes potential problems in the parking lot. Once we decided that there would be two hours between masses, we relatively quickly settled on the Sunday schedule of 8am – 10 am – and 12 noon.



Weekdays were a little more challenging. The current schedule at St. Christine is 8:30 daily. At Holy Cross, it is 7 am on Mondays and Thursdays and 9 am on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

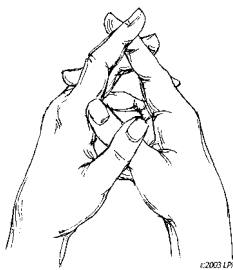
I personally met with the folks from the 7 am mass on Monday, February 1st, after mass. We discussed the possibility of a change in mass times and considered alternatives to the 7 am. I noted that many who come to the 7 am also come to the 9 am on the other days of the week. I also pointed out that the size of the 9 am crowd is significantly greater than that of the 7 am. In other words, we seem to be serving a larger population by having mass at 9 am rather than at 7 am.

On the other hand, people pointed out that for many who have to go to work, 9 am does not work. We noted that there are some other opportunities for early morning mass not far from Holy Cross. When we looked at things from simply a numbers point of view, it made more sense to stick with a 9 am mass time. We realized that this could be an inconvenience to those who work, but we speculated that they probably already go to surrounding parishes on days when there is a 9 am at Holy Cross. We hope that they will find opportunity to do so now on a more regular basis.

A couple of other important variables came into our conversation. One is that according to church law, it is preferable that a priest not say more than one mass on any given day. This helps keep mass from becoming routine and “automatic” for him. The other was that in a time of fewer priests, we have to consider the long-term effects of parish schedules and practices upon priests. With that in mind, I indicated the importance to me of having a regular day off. Friday is my current day off.

Last but not least, I noted an opportunity that I learned from my previous assignment at Ascension. During the week, on days when there was a funeral, we canceled the daily mass and the usual daily mass assembly came to the funeral mass. This was extremely helpful. This assembly served as greeters, ministers of hospitality and ushering, often as lectors and Eucharistic ministers. Funeral directors often commented on how important this ministry was.

With all these factors in mind, the joint pastoral councils recommended, and I readily accepted, that the daily mass schedule would be Monday through Thursday at 9 am. If there is a funeral, the funeral would be scheduled at 9 am and the daily mass assembly would be encouraged to come to the funeral mass. On those occasions when circumstances dictated a different time for the funeral, we will announce to the assembly the day before the change in the scheduling.



The feeling was strong among the council members that this would provide a consistent and easily understood schedule for our folks. It would also be a great opportunity to involve many people in the

very important ministry of caring for the families and friends of those who have died. The presence of our daily mass participants at funerals will be a clear sign of our love and concern for the bereaved.

Some concern was raised about not having mass on First Friday of the month. We noted that there were ample opportunities to celebrate

First Friday mass at other parishes. We also decided that our deacon could lead a liturgy of the Word and communion service on Fridays.

In all of this, we recognize that things are provisional. We will have to observe if these decisions have been wise. We’ll have to give it at least six months to a year to see how appropriate this schedule is. If we have made significant mistakes, we will correct them as time goes on.

So by way of summary, the initial mass schedule for Our Lady of the Lake Parish, **effective February 22, 2010**, will be as follows:

Weekends:

Saturday	4 pm		
Sunday	8 am	10 am	12 noon

Weekdays:

Monday	9 am
Tuesday	9 am
Wednesday	9 am
Thursday	9 am

Fridays:

Liturgy of the Word Service and
Communion 9 am

I sincerely thank all those who were involved in the process by which we came to these decisions. It is an exceedingly hopeful sign that people from both Holy Cross and St. Christine can come together and in a spirit of collaboration and Christian charity make decisions with the good of all in mind. I hope this will be just the first of many wise and lifegiving decisions to come.

***** Please note that the Mass schedule on February 20/21 will be 4pm, 7:30am, 9am, and 11am for this weekend only.**