

WEEKEND MASS TIMES PROPOSAL

THE PURPOSE/GOAL

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati is asking all of its parishes to reach a goal of about 40% of their seating capacity being used in their weekend Masses. Combined, our sister parishes of Church of the Incarnation and St. Francis of Assisi currently have nine Masses each weekend, seven of them on Sundays. St. Francis is currently at 39% seating capacity used. Incarnation is currently at about 26% seating capacity used. Incarnation needs to discontinue two Masses in order to come close to the 40% capacity goal.

- ❖ The capacity used during Masses is calculated by taking the *total* number of people attending the Saturday evening/Sunday Masses for a weekend and *dividing* it by the product of the number of Masses involved *times* the number of seats in the church. For example, 2000 people attending 6 Masses in a church with 1000 seats would be 2000 *divided* by (6 *times* 1000), or 2000 *divided* by 6000 = 33%.
In other words: # people / (# Masses x # seats).

OUR SITUATION

At Incarnation:

- Our current best estimate is that we have 3,800 registered families.
- Incarnation is slowly recovering from the 2020 pandemic with recent counts of 1500-1800 people attending 6 weekend Masses.
- Our church can seat 1,000 people at a Mass.
- Our current seating capacity used during weekend Masses runs between 25% to 30%. (1500 / 6000 = 25%)

CONSIDERATIONS

- The Code of Canon Law (canon 905§2) states that priests are permitted to preside over two Masses per day if there is a just cause or pastoral necessity to do so. (Midnight to midnight = one day.) Currently Incarnation's priests each preside over three Masses every weekend, with special permission from the archdiocese.
- We want to keep the characteristics of the individual Masses as much as we can. This includes things like Mass opportunities for the Nearer to God Band ministry, a low sensitivity Mass, and breakout rooms nearby for RCIA and children's programs (in the future).
- We currently have one Mass in the PAC (Parish Activity Center) in order to have the extra rooms required for a possible children's program and a low-sensitivity Mass option for those who prefer lower light and sound levels during Mass. (Families with members on the autism spectrum are the main users of this option.) The

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children's program especially likes having the PAC St. Joseph Chapel for their room since it is a continuation of a holy space experience during Mass time. However, these options have not been used since the pandemic of 2020. We must also note that it takes about 15 man hours to set up and tear down the gym for Mass every weekend. And, it's in the gym. And other programs would likely use the gym at that time if it were not set up for Mass.

- We can add an extra Mass as needed for holy days like Easter Sunday.
- We cannot have a communion service in place of a Sunday (weekend) Mass unless it is an emergency. Scheduled communion services are not an option.
- The archdiocese would like us to begin the new schedule by July 1, 2022.

THE PROPOSED NEW MASS SCHEDULE

<i>Incarnation Currently:</i>	Saturday: 5:30pm Sunday: 7:30am, 9:00am in PAC, 10:30am, 12:00 noon, 5:00pm
<i>Incarnation Proposed:</i>	Saturday: 5:30pm Sunday: 8:30am, 10:00am, 11:30am (All in the church.)
<i>St. Francis Currently:</i>	Saturday: 5:00pm Sunday: 8:30am and 11:00am

THE BENEFITS

- We keep the Saturday evening Mass, which does not add to the number of Masses each priest has on Sundays.
- The 8:30am Mass is a compromise designed to absorb parishioners from both the 7:30am Mass and the 9:00am Mass. Two years ago we moved a 9:30am Mass back to the 9:00am timeslot. We feel that asking them to move another half hour back would be more acceptable to them than asking them to move a whole hour back. Many of the 9:00am parishioners are families who feel they would not likely make an 8:00am time. Therefore, an 8:00am Mass would mostly be comprised of the current 7:30am parishioners. This would not facilitate a better distribution of parishioners among the Mass times; it would generally just change the Mass time for the 7:30 parishioners. Plus we feel that an 8:30am time is closer to the popular timespan at most churches of around 9-11:00am. We realize that St. Francis has this same Mass time of 8:30am, but we feel that most of our parishioners will opt to attend Incarnation Masses, as it is their "home Mass."

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- The 10:00am Mass is a compromise designed to absorb parishioners from both the 9:00am Mass and the 10:30am Mass. We feel this would help facilitate a better distribution of parishioners among the Mass times.
- The 11:30am Mass is a compromise designed to absorb parishioners from both the 10:30am Mass and the 12:00pm Mass. We feel this would help facilitate a better distribution of parishioners among the Mass times.
- The 12:00pm Mass parishioners would only have to move back one half hour.
- Allows the PAC Mass to move out of the gym setting and into a church, which is more holy and appropriate. Enhancements could be made to the church to provide benefits for families with low sensitivity needs and quieting room needs.
- By having 8:30am, 10:00am, and 11:30am Masses, we give our parishioners three Masses in the popular timespan. We agree that our Sunday morning parishioners would usually be able to make one of these three options. If they need another option, there is the 11:00am Mass at St. Francis of Assisi. We do not feel that having an 8:30am Mass like St. Francis is detrimental to either of our parishes.
- This new schedule maximizes Sunday morning attendance by offering three Mass times in a row, which helps promote events and service projects held on Sunday mornings (such as Christmas Kindness, St. Vincent collections, religious education, and Donut Sundays).

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

1. Publicize the new schedule 1-2 months in advance (in May, before school is out for the summer, would be advantageous).
 - a. Both parish bulletins for four Sundays minimum
 - b. Parish Flocknote/other apps
 - c. Parish websites
 - d. Verbal Mass announcements from both pulpits for four Sundays minimum
 - e. Signs at entry points for our church and PAC for four Sundays minimum
 - f. Incarnation School app
 - g. Incarnation School email newsletter
 - h. Other nearby parish's bulletins
2. We recommend that headcounts for individuals and families be recorded at least for the next year, perhaps for the foreseeable future, to evaluate the Masses for percent of capacity used, in case future recommendations need to be made.
3. We recommend for Incarnation a "last Mass" celebration for the 7:30am Mass, the 9:00am Mass in the PAC, the 10:30am Mass and the 12:00 noon Mass before August 15, 2022.

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4. This proposal should be implemented between August 1 and August 15, 2022. This extra time is needed in order for the Worship Commission and others to have time to react to the changes and develop new schedules for servers, Eucharist Ministers, lectors, musicians, etc.

Respectfully submitted by the Mass Times Committee: Janel Skerl (Chair), Alex Abuyuan, Gerry Budi, Bob Hutter, Marty Hydell, Shawn Lamb, Sonia Lamb, Ruth Reeve, Raymond Ten Eyck, Jim Weckesser, and Howard Emsley as our Parish Council representative.

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ADDENDUM FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

➤ Keep the Sunday 5:00pm Mass.

The committee would like to give the Sunday 5:00pm Mass another year or two to reach its full potential, since it did not begin until the summer of 2020 during the start of the pandemic. Its numbers have been increasing lately and people are becoming more actively involved in programs and groups. The Mass can serve as an evangelical outreach to our school's families. It can also serve as an opportunity for fraternity among youth groups and other groups in conjunction with our community celebrating the Holy Eucharist. More specifically:

- It meets more schedule variances for families with children in weekend sports.
- It also meets more schedule variances for individuals who work second shift/sleep-in through Sunday mornings.
- This Mass could benefit younger attendees such as grade school (Incarnation School and PREP), junior high (Incarnation School and PREP) and high school age children. Asking them to attend Mass together as a group before or after a social event or a faith formation event would encourage their faith life. The students could have roles every so often, or perhaps every Sunday, during these Masses. This would help them feel more connected to the Church and foster a stronger foundation in our religion to see them through their high school years and into their young adult years. It is likely that some other of their family members would accompany them.
- A 5:00pm Mass offers greater flexibility to families and groups:
 - allows for an earlier dinner on a school night (during the school year) than a 6:00pm Mass does;
 - allows time options for groups to meet before or after the Mass;
 - allows for junior high PREP students to go out for a quick dinner with their family after Mass or have a pizza party at the PAC in-between Mass and PREP;
 - allows senior citizens who do not like to drive in the dark an added couple of months each year to attend Mass at Incarnation before switching to a 4:30pm Mass at St. Leonard's during the shorter-daylight winter months.
- A late Sunday Mass is a move toward **evangelizing** the younger generations and bringing young adults an end-of-the-weekend Mass time option.
- While our committee wants to cooperate with the idea of our priests presiding over only one to two Masses per day, and adding an extra Mass would require one of them to say a third Mass each Sunday, we realize that there is an option to have visiting and retired priests preside at this 5:00pm Mass, or one of the earlier Sunday Masses, if the pastor would so prefer.
- Our 5:00pm time does not compete directly with St. Mary's 6:00pm Sunday Mass.

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NEXT STEPS

Extend the 5:00pm Sunday Mass on a trial basis for another year or more. This Mass was implemented during the covid pandemic of 2020. Since then, group activities have not fully resumed. This Mass has not reached its full potential.

- ❖ Church staff could work with school staff, parish group leaders, and volunteers to explore ways in which to increase fraternity potential among parish groups (whether school students or other groups like young adults) and to maximize evangelical opportunities to lapsed or questioning Catholics.
- ❖ Publicize this Mass in our bulletins and Flocknotes and website. Also publicize this Mass in other nearby parish bulletins.
- ❖ If the counts are low after attempts to maximize its potential for a year or two, discontinue this Mass.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Keep the 5:00pm Sunday Mass. We recommend that headcounts for individuals and families be recorded at least for the next year.

Respectfully submitted by the Mass Times Committee: Janel Skerl (Chair), Alex Abuyuan, Gerry Budi, Bob Hutter, Marty Hydell, Shawn Lamb, Sonia Lamb, Ruth Reeve, Raymond Ten Eyck, Jim Weckesser, and Howard Emsley as our Parish Council representative.