

Auburn-N. Cayuga Planning Team  
Minutes from May 1, 2018  
Holy Family, Auburn (School Building)

**Attendance**

Present: **Holy Family:** Fr. John Gathenya, Liza Kelly, Bob Ringwood, **Our Lady of the Snow:** Fr. Bill Darling, Diane Case, Edward O'Neil, **Sacred Heart/St. Ann:** Fr. Michael Brown, Patrick Dooley, Kim Guinnip (alternate for Fr. Brown), **Ss. Mary and Martha, St. Mary's:** Fr. Frank Lioi, **Ss. Mary and Martha:** James Malinowski, Dan Szozda, **St. Alphonsus:** Fr. Tim Niven, Lisa Ann Homic, Nancy Camardo, **St. Mary's:** Joseph Manning, **St. Joseph School:** Anne Marie Duffy, **Staff representatives:** Shawn Gillen-Caryl, Aaron Wilson, **Diocesan staff:** Karen Rinefierd, Tom Kubus, **Note Taker:** Nancy Smith

Excused: **Sacred Heart/St. Ann:** Frank DeOrio, **Ss. Mary and Martha, St. Mary's:** Fr. Erick Vilorio

**Opening Prayer:** Prayer for Guidance at 6:47 pm

Karen thanked Father John Gathenya for hosting and introduced Nancy Smith. Attendance sheet going around.

**Working to agreement on a weekend Mass schedule utilizing 4 priests:**

**Cluster 2: Holy Family, Sacred Heart/St. Ann, St. Alphonsus**

**Saturday evening Masses:**

**What did we learn from parishioners:**

- People didn't like the 6 pm Saturday Mass time.
- 7 am Mass is popular.
- Stopping Mass during winter in St. Ann's would make it hard on that community.
- Holy Family's Mass moving to 6 pm would mean they are losing out twice as they are also losing a Sunday Mass.
- Holy Family holds community activities after the 4:30 so moving to 6 pm would make that difficult.
- Big concern for Holy Family on Saturday is the walkers crossing North Street in the dark.

**Any modifications to any of the proposed Mass options or a different schedule?**

- All parishes will have some impact. Is our reasoning totally on numbers and attendance?
- Will Holy Family suffer if both Saturday and Sunday Masses change?
- How close can we put Masses together so priests can travel?
- Is it reasonable if 4 pm is earliest? What are best Saturday times? Latest 5:15? It's up to priests.
- Also consider impact of scheduling baptisms during or after Mass.
- Is there another church where a 5:30 Mass would be acceptable?
- St. Mary's once had a 7:30 pm Mass that was popular especially in summer, people still call about it.
- Holy Family and St. Alphonsus could alternate 4 pm Mass between them.
- When proposed schedule of Masses was advertised, some Holy Family parishioners thought it was final and began to make decisions to find a new parish. Attendance and contributions have

already dropped. We all know we have to make sacrifices but if we lose a Mass we expect the other churches would respect that Holy Family is losing on both days. We would also lose our music director with the later Mass time. He has a second job that begins at 6 pm.

- We don't like to make decisions based on personnel; however, Holy Family is affected on 2 of its 3 Masses. We need to have the least impact as possible. Earliest time for Vigil Mass in our diocese is 4 pm.
- Would St. Alphonsus or Sacred Heart be able to do a 5:30 Mass? There are few walkers at Sacred Heart but there are objections to interfering with dinner times. St. Alphonsus: people would adjust their schedules or attend a different Mass in the cluster.
- 5:15 Mass? It is too early for a priest who says the 4 pm Mass especially if there's a baptism.
- Concern that parishioners can lose touch with their priests if the priests have to quickly go to the next church on the schedule.
- There needs to be a 5:30 Mass because of travel. Concern at St. Alphonsus is because 4:00 pm is their best-attended Mass. Holy Family's best attended is 9 am which is why we came up with this schedule.
- Alternate: 5:30 half the year at Sacred Heart and half the year at St. Alphonsus and keep Holy Family 4 pm all year long. What time of year would the changeover in times be done? One church would have darkness depending on who walks or drives.
- Alternating is now done at Ss. Mary and Martha and some don't like it—one of the churches is basically closed on Saturdays. However, people preferred rotation rather than losing Masses, and the attendance is greater as the Masses are combined.
- Issue is fairness, a perception that all three parishes would suffer equally.

#### **Reaching agreement:**

- **Saturdays: 4 pm Holy Family, 4:30 & 5:30 rotating in some way between St. Alphonsus and Sacred Heart**—could their Pastoral Councils figure this out when the time comes to implement it, and decide on when to rotate, e.g. daylight savings time changeover, fiscal year, around scheduled fundraisers?
- Not good to publish that there will be a rotation without saying something more concrete.
- This shouldn't have to be effective this July so there should be time for the Pastoral Councils to get together.
- Would Holy Family be negatively affected by moving up a half hour? Holy Family planning team member doesn't think so. People wanted the Mass time moved up because daylight was the main issue and it would prove the team listened to the people.
- What is the impact on Mass liturgical ministers of rotating Masses? We should try this schedule for a year and see what happens but figure out rotation first.

#### **Sunday Morning Masses**

##### **What did we learn from parishioners:**

- Only issue was to keep a Mass at St. Ann's year round.
- Take out Option B, the seasonal one, and decide between Options A and C. Option A spreads Mass times out, C has two Masses at the same time, but is closest to current schedule.
- There are a lot of Lakers at St. Ann—would 8:30 be too early for summer, and would it be a problem in winter if plows are not out that early?

##### **Any modifications to any of the proposed Mass options or a different schedule?**

- Travel time discussion about whether a priest could get from 7:30 am Mass at Sacred Heart to 9 am at St. Ann, or if St. Alphonsus prefers 10:15 over 10:30, could a priest get to St. Alphonsus from St. Ann?

- It's a change for St. Alphonsus on both days but neither they nor Sacred Heart is losing a Mass.
- A later time at St. Alphonsus might be better for Religious Education students.
- The later time might impact Eucharistic Ministers to care facilities. 10:15 would be better than 10:30, or have Ministers go during or before the Mass. After this process is completed, we should coordinate the hospital and nursing home ministries with each other so that parishes are not duplicating visits.

**Reaching agreement:**

- **Sunday mornings: 7:30 Sacred Heart, 8:45 St. Ann, 9:00 Holy Family, 10:15 St. Alphonsus, 11:00 Sacred Heart.**

**Cluster 1: Our Lady of the Snow, Ss. Mary and Martha, St. Mary's**

**What did we learn from parishioners:**

- St. John's, Port Byron, is not happy about not having a weekend Mass.
- This cluster has 6 churches and the most travel between them.
- All 6 parishes have had some kind of change, unlike the other Cluster.
- Everyone wants at least one Mass at their church.
- Why does St. Mary's have 4 Masses?
- Could we take the 12 noon Mass from St. Mary's and move it to Ss. Mary and Martha?
- 7 am Mass at St. Mary's is very well attended, best in city.
- Older people tend to like the later Masses.
- There have been many changes in pastors over the last several years, and if Masses get changed, people will leave.
- People at St. John's would like the 7 am Mass that is now at St. Mary's.
- Ss. Mary and Martha people want a dedicated Sunday Mass at each church and not rotated.
- Karen commends all members of the team who went to the parishioner meetings and did as they were asked and just listened. Some parishioners were disappointed in their own representatives because they thought the reps should have spoken up for their own parishes, but that was not their role at the parishioner meetings.

**Any modifications to any of the proposed Mass options or a different schedule?**

- Let everyone have something—leave Our Lady of the Snow's schedule alone (Saturday 5 pm St. John Port Byron, Sunday 8:30 am St. Patrick Cato and 10:30 St. Joseph Weedsport) but change the Sunday schedule: St. Mary's 7 am, move to 8:15 Ss. Mary and Martha, merge two St. Mary's 9:45 and 12 noon with Pastoral Council deciding the time, and 11:30 Ss. Mary and Martha.
- Discussion: This would make 9 Masses in Cluster 1. The 7 am Mass at St. Mary's, the largest attended Mass in Auburn, would be a regional Mass located in Cluster 1 and the 5 pm Mass at St. Alphonsus would be the regional Mass located in Cluster 2. Is it doable to have a priest do 5 Masses every other week when only 40 attend the Mass at Port Byron? Keeping the Saturday Mass at Port Byron would give elasticity to Port Byron in the immediate future; but as the number of parishioners fades away, since there is no growth anticipated, that Mass eventually could be eliminated without any disruption to the overall schedule. Three Masses on a Saturday are not warranted but one planning team member is sympathetic to the St. John's parishioners who have gone there many years. Senior citizens come to Port Byron from Montezuma where there used to be a church. There has been only one new baby in recent years in that congregation. At least half the attendees live outside of Port Byron, and people don't walk there except for the parishioner across the street. A transportation ministry might be an answer,

as Port Byron is 5 minutes away from Weedsport. Cato is in an unusual location, parishioners live in rural areas. They are very loyal to their church and to their legacy. There are more young parishioners in Cato.

- Can we rotate Saturday evening Masses or will some Port Byron people continue to come to St. Hyacinth? More people from Weedsport are at the Port Byron Mass. Would there be an impact if there were no Saturday Mass? Cato and Weedsport would like to keep their Mass times. If Saturday is needed, they can go to Auburn. People in Our Lady of the Snow are more flexible for time or for driving to Auburn for a Saturday Mass.
- St. John's people will be upset to lose their one weekend Mass but there will still be a Friday morning Mass, weddings, funerals, baptisms and meetings. We need time to organize a transportation ministry to bring people to Saturday Mass in Auburn for the half dozen people who would need a ride. Should we keep the 5 pm at Port Byron but eventually have to change it as attendance fades away or should we change it now when all the others are changing? We can use this time to prepare the community. The parish and the villages aren't growing in population.
- Cato doesn't have a guarantee they'll have no change. It has diversity in occupations and not as large a generation gap as the other churches. They have had 8:30 am Mass a long time, and once had a Saturday evening Mass.
- It is better to bite the bullet on St. Johns now and eliminate the Mass when the large planning team is making the decision rather than having just the cluster make the decision.
- Discussion about dedicated Sunday Mass times in Ss. Mary and Martha churches.

**Reaching agreement:**

- **Saturdays: 4 pm Ss. Mary and Martha (rotated between St. Francis and St. Hyacinth) and 5:30 pm St. Mary's.**
- **Sundays: 7 am St. Mary's, 8:15 St. Patrick Cato, 8:30 Ss. Mary and Martha, 10:00 St. Joseph Weedsport, 10:30 St. Mary's (needs to be discussed with Pastoral Council and parishioners), 11:30 Ss. Mary and Martha.**

**Communicating the new Mass schedule – When? How? A Q and A responding to questions asked at the parishioner meetings?**

- Bulletin deadlines are up to two weeks ahead of date of publication; papers could be placed in the back of churches; or bulletin inserts which can be done more quickly.
- Provisional for St. Mary's people: offer them 10:15, 10:30 or 10:45 and they can choose the time.
- Bulletin article will be for weekend of May 19 & 20. The parish can pick between a bulletin article or an insert. Karen will keep the article as small as possible if the parishes want to choose an article.

**Next Planning Team Meeting: Thursday, June 14, 6:45 pm, Sacred Heart, 2 agenda items**

**Closing Prayer:** Our Father at 8:45 pm