

Dear Parishioners,

+JMJ

Here are two topics I've been thinking a lot about: a permanent live streaming solution for our Masses and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and all the questions attached to it. Beware: There are a number of questions below without answers yet. I just want to help us all realize that there is sometimes a lot of thought that has to go into what might on the surface seem pretty simple to do.

I'm pretty convinced that it would be a good thing permanently to provide live streaming of Masses. My main motivation is to provide something for our own parishioners who are homebound or in nursing homes. That's really the bottom line for me. Might some Catholics get so used to staying at home and watching the Mass that they decide not to show up in person, even once the obligation to attend Mass is put back in place after COVID-19? Perhaps. But, I think that serious Catholics will come back to Mass when prudence allows them to return, especially once the obligation to attend Mass is put back into place by the Bishop. We will definitely make the re-institution of the obligation known to people; and I will teach as much as I have to, so that people understand that watching Mass on TV does not fulfil the obligation, if one is healthy and able to attend in person. It is of course better for our spiritual life to attend in person, if we are able.

My latest inspiration has been to wonder whether some camera equipment could be set up on the same ledge where we now have the Saint Michael statue (without displacing Saint Michael). And, could that camera be controlled remotely by equipment in a cabinet that could be built just below that ledge on the shelf just inside the angel window at the back of the church. That's a pretty wide shelf, and I bet it could hold a cabinet with all the necessary equipment. Where else could we fit everything? Or, could the equipment actually somehow be built into the current adoration room, so that the person running it could stand in there and watch the Mass? The same question could be asked about the current confessional room, where the equipment is now set up temporarily. I hope to call a couple companies to give us some ideas. If there's anybody out there who is passionate about this, and would have the time and energy to help me research it and eventually implement it, please let me know.

I've had a handful of people approach me asking when adoration can put back as it used to be. At the same time, I've heard pretty regularly that we had a very hard time covering the hours of adoration that used to be scheduled. It seems pretty clear to me that whatever we schedule has to take into account our real capacity. It won't work for our staff members to fill in empty hours where nobody has signed up. So, what is a reasonable schedule? How do I figure out sustainable hours for adoration? Start by adding another day of adoration each week, now that we have Thursday's in place?

Then, where should the adoration take place? On Thursdays it seems to be working well in the main church, especially during COVID-19, when we have to socially distance. Couldn't it be always out in the main church? Then, if we have some very early adoration hours, as early as 5 AM as we've had before, do we delegate somebody to expose the Blessed Sacrament that early in the main church? (I think it requires the Bishop's permission to delegate a layperson for such exposition.) If we do that, then we would repose the Blessed Sacrament during Mass, and expose it again right after Mass. And, how late do we go in the evening; and who reposes the Blessed Sacrament?

I've also had people ask me when communion services could start up again. That's also not a simple question. The Diocesan *Pastoral Policy Handbook* for quite some years has stated that "the scheduling of a Mass and a communion service on the same day undermines the importance of the Eucharistic sacrifice which, in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council is the 'source and summit' of the Church's life. In these circumstances, it is advisable to schedule a celebration of the Word or the Liturgy of the

Hours, when a Mass is celebrated on the same day.” Then in August of 2018, a longer set of guidelines replaced the paragraph containing that last quote with a new document that says regarding communion services that, “The local ordinary (i.e., bishop) has *not* given permission for such celebrations to take place in parishes.” A communion service would only be allowed when a priest suddenly gets sick, and at the last minute you have no way of getting another priest. Given that pretty clear understanding, I don't think we can bring communion services back again.

But, what *can* we do to accommodate those people who would like an early service? Should I celebrate a Mass once a week that is at 6:15 AM, just as I celebrate a Mass that is at 5:15 PM for people to attend at the end of the work day? Or, could we have somebody lead the Liturgy of the Hours, as the old paragraph from the *Pastoral Policy Handbook* suggests? Or is there an early enough time for the daily Mass that would accommodate those people who have to go to work, without losing those people who attend the 9AM Mass? We have a really nice crowd for most daily Masses. Is there a compromise time that could work?

I hope that various members of our parish committees can help me answer some of the questions above. I don't have answers for all of them yet. Have a blessed week!

In cordibus Iesu et Mariae,
Father Poggemeyer