

# Revision of Weekend Mass Times

## To the faithful of Holy Family, Reigate, St. Teresa's, Merstham and St. Joseph's, Redhill.

We wrote to you on 29th September 2007, outlining the arrangements for the pastoral care and the process of change in our three parishes until July 2008. We are working towards becoming one parish, still with three churches, and with a team of three priests. Over this past month we have all made a good start on this journey.

In our letter, we informed you that Bishop Kieran has asked us to look seriously at a revised weekend Mass schedule that can still be celebrated when only two priests are available. (It is worth noting that with each priest in the team taking proper holiday and retreat time this should account for 12 to 15 weekends per year.) We have been considering this over the past month, and now it is time to present our thoughts on the matter.

The substantial constraints of a 'two priest' schedule, when properly examined, leave us with very few choices. Both priests can celebrate a maximum of three Masses, giving us a total of SIX Masses to work with between the three churches. Currently, we have EIGHT 'Sunday' Masses, including the Saturday Vigil Masses.

Our first concern is that each church should have a 'Principal Mass' on Sunday morning. These Masses are a focal point for the community, often with music, children's liturgy and social time afterwards. Most communities want this Mass in the middle of the morning at 10 or 10.30am. When only two priests are available this is not possible. One of the priests will need to celebrate two principal Masses in different locations. Allowing this priest realistic time for preparation, coffee, social time, safe travel and a loo break means that the two principal Masses he celebrates will need to be at 9am and 11am. To offer the widest spread and choice of times, the remaining principal Mass should be at 10am.

Aside from the principal Masses in the three churches, we need to offer Masses at other times and locations to give people the widest choice and opportunity to attend. We need a Mass on Saturday evening, Sunday evening, and early Sunday morning. Including one Mass at each of these times gives us our total of six Masses.

Redhill already offers the only early and late Masses on Sunday, so there seems little point in changing these. Currently we have Saturday vigil Masses in all three churches. In the revised schedule we can only offer one Saturday Vigil Mass. Our limited choices then are: where will the one Saturday Vigil Mass be celebrated, and how shall we allocate the principal Masses at 9, 10, and 11am?

Our choice at this stage is:

Saturday Vigil 6pm (Reigate), then on Sunday:

8am (Redhill),

9am (Reigate), 10am (Merstham), 11am (Redhill),

5.30pm (Redhill)

Our reasons for this choice include:

Offering the two evening Masses in different locations.

Reigate currently offers the earliest of the principal Masses, and so will continue to do so, but at an earlier time.

The principal Mass at Redhill is already at capacity, so we wish to avoid putting any extra pressure of numbers upon it.

As the principal Mass at Merstham will be the only weekend Mass there, it is at the best time for the greatest number of people.

Our target date for changing the Mass times is Sunday 13th January 2008.

We have our open meeting at 3pm on Sunday 9th December at St. Bede's School, 64 Carlton Road, RH1 2LQ. On the agenda at that meeting will be:

How do we feel about becoming one parish with three churches?

How do we feel about the proposed Mass schedule?

What positive opportunities do we see in this new situation?

We invite you to begin making your responses to us in advance of the December meeting. Letter or e-mail is preferred, but do also chat to us when you see us during this next month. It is particularly important to include those who can't be at the meeting. All voices need to be heard, including the quieter ones.

With our prayers,

Your priests:

With our thanks and prayers,

Your priests:

Fr. Laurence Quin-Morris  
Fr. Charles Howell  
Fr. Dominic O'Hara  
27<sup>th</sup> October 2007

*"Glory be to Him whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine; glory be to Him from generation to generation in the Church and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. Amen."*

*(Eph. 3:20-21)*