

December 8, 2018

My brothers and sisters,

On the reverse of this page is the revised Mass Schedule for the Braintree Collaborative parishes.

There are some changes that impact Sunday Mass participants. The reason for these changes is the declining number of priests. Two primary issues needed to be addressed promptly: two Vigil Masses going on at the same time on Saturdays; and too many Masses on Sunday morning for us to fulfill properly.

A third question involves the location of the 6PM Mass. I'm committed to keeping the Mass; the question is whether we use St. Francis Church or St. Clare Church.

The principles I've used in making these decisions have been driven by data related to attendance and the availability of clergy. The questions for me were. 'When are people coming to Mass now?' and 'What is the most we can do in providing for parishioners' needs?' and 'How can the facilities and staff best be employed to address those needs?'

**SATURDAY EVENING:** At this time there are enough people attending Vigil Masses to justify 2 Masses, 1 in each church. The 4PM at St. Clare is the larger of the two by good measure, so the 4PM will remain there. My choices for the second Mass were 5PM, 5:30PM or 7PM. I settled on the 5:30 due to parishioner feedback ruling out the 7PM option, and that both of these Masses may need to be celebrated by the same priest from time to time.

**SUNDAY MORNING:** The two largest and most stable Masses are the 10:15 at St. Clare and the 11:30 at St. Francis. Here are both of our choirs and large congregations made up of parishioners from both churches. These two Masses will stay in place.

That meant that the remaining 3 Masses needed to be reduced to 2 – again, 1 in each church. The new schedule will challenge people in each of these congregations to adjust their Sunday morning routine.

**SUNDAY EVENING:** **AT THIS TIME**, the 6PM will remain at St. Clare's. I expect to move it to St. Francis, certainly before the start of a new School Year. This is a very complicated decision involving many issues related to staff, safety, and the wise use of the buildings. Keep praying about this with me.

I thank all who provided feedback and input, and I thank all of you for your practice of the Catholic Faith.

Please know of my prayers and best wishes for the Christmas Season and a New Year filled with grace.

In His service and yours,

Fr. Paul T. Clifford

**NEW MASS SCHEDULE  
EFFECTIVE THE WEEKEND OF  
JANUARY 6, 2019**

**Saturday Evening**

St. Clare 4:00PM

St. Francis of Assisi 5:30PM

**Sunday Morning**

St. Clare 7:45AM and 10:15AM

St. Francis of Assisi 9:00AM and 11:30AM

**Sunday Evening**

St. Clare 6:00PM

**\*The 6PM Mass will be moving to  
St. Francis of Assisi at a later date.**