

Pastoral Council Meeting Notes

Thursday, February 13, 2025, 7:00-8:00 pm

Present: St. Mark and St. Mel Pastoral Councils

Topics Discussed:

1. Mass Schedule for 2026
 2. Discussion of Bishop's letter to parishioners—what can we do as a church community?
- Mass Schedule for 2026: it will be a reduced Mass schedule—planning for Mass times next year. The new Mass schedule will start the second Sunday in ordinary time in 2026 (after the Christmas season in 2025).
 - Current head count at Mass 1x/month (see chart)
 - St. Marks-478, St. Mel's-450
 - Total Vigil Masses—190-230

Conclusion: we can combine in terms of seating capacity in the future

- Sunday Masses: also can seat everyone combined with new Mass times; the crowds can be accommodated.
- The Bishop wants us to look at this combination, and stated that it may create a “fuller assembly” (richer Mass/worship)
- Within our Deanery: Mass times are 9:00 am and 11:00 am at many parishes within the Deanery in Westpark (which will drain on the drawing of people to each individual parish for Mass when they are at the same times)
- Guidelines: Saturday and Sunday Masses must be able to be done by one priest according to Cleveland Diocesan guidelines. Priest and the musicians need to be able to get to multiple Masses on a Saturday or Sunday (or Vigil day) comfortably.
- Keeping 7:00 Mass in the schedule is important—St. Mel has the early 7:00am Mass (and we need to keep it). We also have to coordinate (comfortably) with what other parishes are doing.
- Fr. Adam's two options (proposals) for St. Mel/St. Mark new Mass times in 2026, which we discussed at this meeting. The final thoughts after discussion were the following:
 - Saturday: Confessions—3:00 pm at St. Mark's; Sunday Vigil Mass—4:30 pm at St Mark's
 - Sunday: Masses—6:45 am St. Mel, 8:30 am St. Mark, 10:30 am St. Mel (possibly 11:00 or 11:30). Fr. Adam will think over this proposal (Proposal #2) and send out a letter to both Pastoral Councils/parishes with the final decision.
 - Great note: St. Mark's has a young families' group (to support young families in the parish)—they have started to tell St. Mel young families

about this group also and are willing to continue reaching out to families to let them know about the group! 😊

- Discussion of Bishop's letter to parishioners—what can we do as a church community?
 - For our “individual journey” (each parishioner)—Fr. Adam will give parishioners a link of a “question of the month” with the 15 minutes of prayer daily that the Bishop asked parishioners to do.
 - Worship—Mass and music ministry is going well overall. Helping parishioners to individually engage (and as a group) more with the act of worship (either as the assembly or in specific ministries to serve within the Mass).
 - Having the Pastoral Council help with discussion about the “parish journey”.
 - Talking through Bishop's letter—what do we do for the parish? Begin the conversation:
 - ✓ Evangelization: How do we draw in and connect the “disconnected” people, both Catholic and non-Catholic? What is it about each parish (what does each have) to draw people to us? Could faith-sharing (small) groups be a possibility, even between the two parishes? How do we get the two parishes to start a relationship between individuals? Possibly pairing intergenerational families within parishes to get to know each other?
 - ✓ Service: St. Mark's—has Habitat for Humanity (with a small section of the parish); St. Mel's—has the food pantry, the school supplies drive.
 - ✓ How can we offer more service activities to spark more opportunities for evangelization? Can we think of more activities during the Jubilee year (this year) to engage surrounding communities?
 - Secular activities for community outreach to consider:
 - ✓ General talks: financial planning; caregiver information for the elderly; Kamm's Corners Winter Farmer's Market (offering St. Mel Hall again for the market); growing the food pantry.
 - ✓ Advertising what each of the parishes offers more: how do we get the word out? Are there opportunities to combine programs, or come together to talk about ideas?

In the next months, we are going back to individual regular Pastoral Council schedules:

- Next Pastoral Council Meetings (to be held in each individual parish):
 - St. Mel: March, May 2025
 - St. Mark: April, June 2025
- Next joint Pastoral Council gathering/picnic: July 2025

