

"TO LIVE IS TO CHANGE, AND TO BE PERFECT IS TO HAVE CHANGED OFTEN."

St. John Henry Newman

January 8, 2023

Dear Parishioners,

In June 2019 Bishop George Murry, S.J. announced a Regionalization plan for the six counties of our Diocese. Bishop David Bonnar has continued to support and implement this plan. Considering diocesan realities, including a decreased number of active parishioners and of priests who are able to serve as pastors, Bishop Bonnar has determined that the Portage North Pastoral Region will be under the guidance of one Pastor and one Parochial Vicar beginning July 1, 2023.

The parishes of Portage North (St. Ambrose, St. Joan of Arc, St. Joseph, and Our Lady of Perpetual Help) will be called upon to collaborate in administration and ministry to strengthen opportunities for worship, formation, and service, and to hopefully welcome more Catholics, especially our youth, within our region to practice their faith.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is our communal worship, the Sacrament of unity. While it will take some getting used to, we must consolidate our Mass schedule. Currently, there are 9 options for Sunday Mass in our region. With only two priests this schedule is impossible to maintain. Sunday Mass is not meant to be celebrated in an empty church. Having fewer Masses with fuller pews will help to provide a better experience of worship and to increase our experience of unity within and between our four parishes.

Be assured that each parish will remain open and will continue to maintain its unique identity and ministry. Our Pastoral Councils will begin the task of establishing a Mass schedule that works for the four parishes. We realize that a change in Mass schedule might mean the elimination of a Mass time at a given parish. Every parish will continue to have at least one Sunday Mass.

Change is often difficult. Throughout our lives we experience necessary changes that can be positive such as when we leave home to go to college, when we marry or move to another city or when we retire and begin a new chapter in our lives. We often need to leave some old ways behind to grow and to improve. Throughout this process, let us focus on the positive aspects of this time of change.

Let us **commit** to praying for a vibrant church that gives glory to God not just through the celebration of the liturgy, but in all facets of ministry and service so that we can reach out in a better way to all who are a part of the Portage North region.

In Christ,


Fr. Chris Luoni


Fr. Shawn Conoboy


Fr. Joe Ruggieri

St. Ambrose-Garrettsville, St. Joan of Arc-Streetsboro, St. Joseph- Mantua, and
Our Lady of Perpetual Help- Aurora