

FROM FR. MARK:

In August 2016, Bishop Braxton assigned me as pastor and Fr. Charles Anyaoku as Parochial Vicar of St. Joseph-Olney, Holy Cross-Wendelin and St. Joseph-Stringtown. At that time, I knew that the assignment of two priests was not going to last. I have been attempting, these past 11 months, to prepare all of us for that moment that is now before us, one priest serving all three of the parishes within our partnership.

We thank Fr. Charles for his presence and service to us for the past 11 months and send him with our prayers to his new assignment at St. Edward-Fairfield and St. Stephen-Flora. Below you will find the discussion of the three Pastoral Councils at a combined meeting on Monday, June 26, 2017. I want everyone to know the direction, in consultation with the Pastoral Council in which we will be moving.

Once again, I will take this opportunity to seek individuals who would be interested in the Diocesan program "Into the Vineyard" that will begin in September. Our Bishop wants our parishes to thrive even amongst the shortage of priests that are available. Please prayerfully consider "Into the Vineyard."

The goal of this two-year program is to increase the number of well- trained Lay Ecclesial (Church) Ministers for servant leadership...to renew and rebuild Catholic life in our Parish Partnerships according to The Pastoral Plan for Parish Renewal and Restructuring.

Parishioners who are chosen and who answer the call to become Lay Ecclesial Ministers will assist Pastors with their responsibilities. Maximum four (4) participants per Parish Partnership. There will be eight sessions per year, beginning on Saturday, September 16, 2017 and on the third Saturday of the month, September through May (no meeting in December) 2017-18 and 2018-19.

Holy Cross Wendelin, St. Joseph's Stringtown, St. Joseph's Olney Joint Pastoral Council Meeting June 26, 2017 7:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Fr. Mark and opened with a prayer. New Pastoral Council members Rita Dhom and Brian Ochs (St. Joseph's Stringtown) and Cindy Blank and Tony Kuenstler (Holy Cross Wendelin) were welcomed.

The re-assignment Fr. Charles Anyaoku as Pastor for St. Edward's Fairfield and St. Stephen's Flora parishes was discussed, leading to a review and consideration about the current schedule for Masses. The schedule is: Saturday 4:30 p.m. @ St. Joseph's Olney; 6:30 p.m. @St. Joseph's Stringtown Sunday 8:00 a.m. @St. Joseph's Olney; 10:00 a.m. @Holy Cross Wendelin

Fr. Mark requested a decision to set Mass times for the next year to allow CRE's to make decisions about religion classes for the upcoming school year. After discussion, the Mass schedule will remain as is with no re-consideration through May 2018.

Also connected to Fr. Charles Anyaoku's departure is the consideration to hire a Pastoral Associate. Fr. Mark shared several documents describing what duties such a position could entail and what duties he/she could assume. A Pastoral Associate would be a lay person with training and education, working under the guidance of the Pastor, to help meet the needs

of our Parishes. All agreed that Fr. Mark should prepare and publish a job description/employment posting as soon as possible.

Fr. Mark is asking for volunteers from our Parishes to participate in the "Into the Vineyard" program offered by Belleville. This program will teach volunteers how to become proactive in keeping our Parishes alive by bringing back ideas to share. Training will be held in Mt. Vernon, Belleville, or Marion one Saturday per month beginning in September. Please consider if this might be your calling to give back to our Parishes.

Reminder of the Michael Mette concert to be held on July 2, 2017 at Holy Cross Wendelin at 3:00 p.m. Everyone is invited and encouraged to participate in the event.

Developing a Tri-Parish bulletin has been a goal since the first meeting of our Joint Pastoral Council. After an activity that helped us to closely examine items in each of our individual bulletins, as a group, the following decisions were made. One, shared bulletin would be created for all Parishes. The shared bulletin would include items that are currently repeated in each bulletin (Fr. Mark's schedule, messages from Belleville, Mass schedule, etc.). Each Parish would create an insert to include messages, picnic/smorg requests, weekly contributions, etc. (items of interest only to those who attend that Parish). Specific items discussed included: A shared Mission Statement for the Parish Partnership needs to be developed with a focus on discipleship, faith nourishment and service to our community.

- A list of criteria for information included in the shared bulletin and each Parish insert needs to be developed with set guidelines for what will and will not be published.
- One person should be responsible for the publication of both the shared bulletin.
- Shared information will include:
 - Mass Schedules and Intentions
 - Contact information for each Parish
 - Fr. Mark's schedule
 - School contact information and school news
 - Calendar of Events
 - Information from our Bishop or the Diocese
 - Let Us Pray For...
 - Scripture Focus
- Parish specific information for the insert will include:
 - Liturgical Ministers/Servers Schedule
 - Collection/Financial Information
 - Fundraising Information
 - Parish Council, School Board, Trustees, etc... information
 - Monthly Bulletin Sponsors

Next meetings were set for Joint and Individual Pastoral Council meetings. The next Joint meeting will be held on September 25, 2017; St. Joseph's Stringtown will meet on July 5, 2017; Holy Cross Wendelin will meet on August 7, 2017; St. Joseph's Olney will meet on August 28, 2017.