

Dear Parishioners of Holy Family Parish,

2022 has been a year of significant change for Holy Family Parish. Canon Brendan Murray retired due to ill health. We keep him in our prayers. Fr. Paul Strain and Fr. Paul Morely have taken up new appointments. We thank them for all their work in this parish and wish them every blessing.

As the new priests in Holy Family Parish, we would like to thank you sincerely for the warm welcome that you have given to us since our arrival in August 2022. It has been a pleasure to get to know you.

We live in changing times as a Church globally. The Synodal Pathway, initiated by Pope Francis, will continue to steer a course for the universal Church in 2023. At a diocesan level, change is in the air too. A group of people, parishioners and clergy, have been looking at the whole issue of planning for the years ahead. Their work has been given the title "Pathways for the Future". Parishes across the diocese will be hearing more about their work in the New Year. Change is also something that is affecting parishes throughout Ireland.

One of the immediate issues that we in Holy Family need to consider as a parish community is the number and times of our Masses. The current Mass schedule reflects a time when there were three active priests in the parish. There are now two. The likelihood is that, in a few years from now, there will be one. With our current Mass schedule, it is not possible for one priest to cover all the Masses. The two Vigil Mass times overlap, as do the 11.30am and 12 noon Mass times. We need to move to a situation where one priest could cover all the Masses if that necessity arose, and this is a possibility, even in the short term. If one of the priests is sick, or on annual leave, or is required to cover Mass in another parish in the Pastoral Community of North Belfast (where two parishes already have only one priest), then one priest in Holy Family needs to be able to cover all Masses here.

Against this backdrop, and for the reasons outlined above, having consulted with the Parish Pastoral Council and the Parish Liturgy Group, we are proposing to change the Mass times from the First Sunday of Advent, and we wish to consult parishioners to get a sense of your preferred options. There are three options proposed for Sundays. Each option allows for a space of at least 90 minutes between Masses. There are also three options proposed for Weekdays, one of which allows for one evening Mass to accommodate those who are working.

We are keen to get parishioners' feedback and so we would ask you to complete the form on the reverse of this page and return it to either the boxes at the back of each church, or to the parish office. Alternatively, people can e-mail their response to the parish office. This is a chance for you the parishioners to shape the necessary change and to make your voice heard.

Change is never easy. It can be unsettling. Some people will be disappointed or annoyed that their preferred Mass time will change. We can understand that and we acknowledge the inconvenience, but we hope that you can appreciate the rationale for the change.

When you have had a chance to consider the proposed changes, **we would ask you to submit your responses by Sunday 6th November** at the latest. This will give the Parish Pastoral Council an opportunity to review the responses and to identify the preferred options. We hope then to communicate the new Mass schedule to parishioners over a number of weekends, with a view to beginning the new schedule on the First Sunday of Advent (Sat. 26th/Sun. 27th November 2022).

Thank you in advance for giving this issue your attention and for your ongoing support. As a community of believers facing a future of change in the Church, at the universal, national, diocesan and parish level, may we always remember that the Risen Lord is with us and His Spirit continues to guide us.

Wishing you and your family every blessing,
Yours sincerely,



Fr. Michael Spence
The Parish Clergy Team



Fr. Robert Sloan



Deacon Brendan Dowd

PROPOSED CHANGES TO MASS TIMES

Please indicate your preferred choices by selecting one option for Sunday Masses and one for Weekday Masses from the tables below:

SUNDAY MASSES		
Option 1	6pm Vigil – Holy Family 9.00am – St Thérèse of Lisieux 10.30am – Holy Family 12noon – St Thérèse of Lisieux	
Option 2	6.30pm Vigil – Holy Family 9.30am – St Thérèse of Lisieux 11.00am – Holy Family 12.30pm – St Thérèse of Lisieux	
Option 3	6pm Vigil – Holy Family 8.30am – St Thérèse of Lisieux 10.30am – Holy Family 12noon – St Thérèse of Lisieux	

WEEKDAY MASSES		
Option 1	Holy Family: Monday, Wednesday & Friday @ 9.15am St Thérèse of Lisieux: Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday @ 10.00am	
Option 2	Holy Family: Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday @ 9.15am St Thérèse of Lisieux: Thursday, Friday & Saturday @ 10.00am	
Option 3	Holy Family: Monday & Friday @ 9.15am, Wednesday @ 7.30pm St Thérèse of Lisieux: Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday @ 10.00am	

Please sign and return your choices to the designated boxes at the entrances of both Churches before the 7th November 2022. Thank you for your cooperation.

Signature