

Dear friends,

I hope this finds you well as we prepare for the next phase of *Partners in the Gospel*. What you have in your hands (or on your screen) is the result of several months of prayer, discussion, and discernment. It is the fruit of consultation and discussion with the priests of our parish family (current and future), our deacons, our key administrative staff (PAAs and principal), and the council chairs at every parish.

You may be wondering – reasonably so! – why changes are necessary at all. I’ve written a long-form explanation about this at my website (www.fathermaurer.com – look for [the post titled ‘Hearth & home’](#)) but the short version is that we’re moving from two pastors to one – across the entirety of the Olympic Peninsula. In order for me to fulfill that responsibility, it is necessary to have a rotation schedule of priests and to have all priests living at a central location. This enables priest coverage to more readily shift according to pastoral needs – in short, if one of us zigs, the other two priests can easily zag.

There’s a lot more to say there, but for that I encourage you to [read the post on my website](#), which dives into that more deeply.

For now, I have a particular need: your thoughtful & prayerful consideration of the Mass and confession schedule changes at hand. While this is ultimately a decision made by the pastor, I would be grateful to hear your thoughts and suggestions. Please carefully read this proposal – perhaps even going through it a few times (it’s not short!) – and take some time to pray over what, if any, feedback you might want me to consider.

To contribute to this process, **please email your feedback no later than Friday, June 7 to feedback@opatholic.org with your council members names in the subject line.** They will collect feedback for each parish and send it to me for prayer & discernment.

Much is being asked of us all – even before we get a chance to meet! Let us be sure to invite Jesus into our deliberations, asking Him to guide us according to His will and grant us His peace throughout all of this. Know of my prayers for you – please pray for me, our two vicars, and all of our fellow Catholics.

Yours in Christ,

Father Jacob Maurer

Council chairs of the Olympic Peninsula

Saint Anne & Saint Thomas

Sue Gibbs (pastoral)

Anita Ferris (finance)

Queen of Angels

Tim Carradine (pastoral)

Maria Rentas (finance)

Saint Joseph

Per Saelid (pastoral)

Glen Juenemann (finance)

Saint Mary Star of the Sea

Wayne Nagy (pastoral)

Richard Smith (finance)

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Operative principles for discerning Mass scheduling

Priest health & welfare

- all priests live together at least for the first year of Partners in the Gospel (mutual support, fraternity)
- vigil Masses are limited to one per priest
- when multiple locations have Masses on a single day, the furthest parish should be the earliest for most efficient use of driving
- Mass scheduling - including travel time - must allow for 30 minutes before AND after Mass (pastoral availability & prayer)
- at least one weekend rotation should be optimized for substitute priests (minimal daily travel, providing for one-way travel home)
- 3x Masses by any one priest on a Sunday (the canonical limit) will only be considered as a temporary emergency measure
- weekend Mass times are to be standardized between rotations to minimize confusion (of priests and parishioners)

Parish health & life

- maintain at least one weekend (Saturday vigil or Sunday) Mass at every open location
- At least one English Mass (Saturday vigil or Sunday) must be offered at each open location
- Initial changes prioritize current English/Spanish locations - Mass cancellations or Mass times changes only
- Mass slots, locations, and times prioritize those who drive more than 45 minutes (one way) to Mass
- Weekend confession scheduling should prioritize Saturday availability at the furthest and center locations

Assumptions

- Weekend Masses will generally be ~1 hour Masses
- Three priests (pastor & two vicars) at least during first year of Partners in the Gospel

Current weekend Mass schedule

	West side rotation		Central rotation		East side rotation
	Saint Anne	Saint Thomas	Queen of Angels	Saint Joseph	Saint Mary Star of the Sea
Confessions	4:30-5:30 pm (Sat)	10:30-11 am (Sun)	8-8:45 am (Sun)	3-3:45 pm (Sat)	3:45-4:15pm (Sat)
Saturday	6 pm (Spanish)		7 pm	4 pm	4:30 pm
Sunday (early)	8:30 am		9 am		8:30 am (Spanish)
Sunday (mid)		11 am		11:30 am*	11 am

* monthly Spanish Mass on the third Sunday of the month

Benefits

- all mid-morning Sunday Masses are at the same time
- all parishes have a vigil Mass
- all locations have at least one English Sunday Mass
- confessions are offered at every location each weekend

Challenges

- morning confession schedule (Saint Thomas & Queen of Angels) prevents priest pastoral presence & prayer before Mass
- evening confession schedule (Saint Joseph & Saint Mary) prevents priest pastoral presence & prayer before Mass
- confession schedules are minimal (less than 1 hour per week per parish)
- vigil Masses are each at a different time
- half of the vigil Masses are late evening Masses
- there are too many vigil Masses (4x) for three priests
- Queen of Angeles early morning Mass is inconsistently scheduled versus other locations
- Saint Joseph mid-morning Mass is inconsistently scheduled versus other locations
- Central rotation is unsustainably heavy on both Saturday & Sunday
- Current living arrangements & rotation between west & central mean that Forks priest makes a 1.5 hour trip four times (there & back twice) in a single weekend, albeit once a month

Proposed weekend Mass schedule

	West side rotation		Central rotation		East side rotation
	Saint Anne	Saint Thomas	Queen of Angels	Saint Joseph	Saint Mary Star of the Sea
Saturday (daily)				9:30 am	9:30 am
Confessions	3 pm to 4 pm		3 pm to 4 pm	3 pm to 4 pm	10 to 11 am
Saturday vigil	5 pm (Spanish)		5 pm	5 pm	
Sunday (early)	8:30 am		8:30 am		8:30 am (Spanish)
Sunday (mid)		11 am		11 am*	11 am

* monthly Spanish Mass on the third Sunday of the month

Benefits

- all locations (parishes and mission) have Sunday Masses
- all locations provide for Mass attendance numbers (as of May 2023)
- **all locations sharing is some of the sacrifice of Mass changes (cancellations or time change)**
 - o **Note from Father Maurer:** This is a major pastoral consideration, as everyone will have skin in the game and no community will be able to claim unfair victory or victim-hood
- English Masses are offered at every location at least once on Sunday
- Spanish Mass locations & timeframes (vigil/Sunday) are maintained
- regularized Mass times allow for ease of priest rotation
- earlier confession time allows for priest rest & meal between driving & Mass (especially if driving far *after* Mass)
- schedule is balanced so that priests making long drive only do so once a day
- schedule and rotation allows for one priest to have a break from long drives at least once a month

Challenges

- still relies on three priests (the status quo is unsustainable)
- weekend confessions not offered at mid-range locations (Saint Thomas & Saint Joseph)

Updated proposal changes after consultation with admin staff & deacons (May 8, 2024)

- (re)added Saturday evening confessions at Saint Joseph

Deep dive analysis: West side rotation (Saint Anne & Saint Thomas)

Current schedule

West side rotation		
	Saint Anne	Saint Thomas
Confessions	4:30-5:30 pm (Sat)	10:30-11 am (Sun)
Saturday	6 pm (Spanish)	
Sunday (early)	8:30 am	
Sunday (mid)		11 am

Proposed schedule

West side rotation		
	Saint Anne	Saint Thomas
Confessions	3 pm to 4pm	
Saturday	5 pm (Spanish)	
Sunday (early)	8:30 am	
Sunday (mid)		11 am

Current schedule considerations

The current schedule for the west side rotation relies heavily on a priest living on-site at Saint Anne (Forks). Additionally, current practice is that the priest residing at Saint Anne parish is **NOT** rotating among other parishes except once a month. In the current arrangement, travel to the current accompanying rotation (Saint Anne/Saint Thomas and Queen of Angels/Saint Joseph) – though not insignificant) – requires that the priest in Forks make the long drive to Saint Joseph (1 hr, 31 minutes) not once but **twice** on weekend.

Proposed schedule considerations

- The proposed confession time allows for **1)** standardization across locations, **2)** priest rest & (potentially) a meal between confessions & Mass (keep in mind that the priest will likely NOT be on the road before 6:30 pm), **3)** maintains period of pastoral presence & prayer before Mass, and **4)** allows the possibility of expansion of confession times during holy seasons or as needed (3 pm to 4:30 pm) without sacrificing the 30 minute period of pastoral presence & prayer before Mass.
 - o Depending on priest availability, confessions could be heard as requested *after* Mass at Saint Thomas

- The proposed Saturday vigil Mass time allows for a more reasonable end-time for the priest (keeping in mind that he will be travelling back to the rectory Port Angeles) as well as providing a safer travel time in general – this may be especially valuable during the winter, when it is darker and/or there are harsher weather conditions (ie, snow)

- The proposed **maintaining** of the Sunday Mass schedule (happily) matches a standardization of Mass times without any need to disrupt the current practice.

Deep dive analysis: Central rotation (Queen of Angels & Saint Joseph)

Current schedule

Central rotation		
	Queen of Angels	Saint Joseph
Confessions	8-8:45 am (Sun)	3-3:45 pm (Sat)
Saturday	7 pm	4 pm
Sunday (early)	9 am	
Sunday (mid)		11:30 am

Proposed schedule

Central rotation		
	Queen of Angels	Saint Joseph
Confessions	3pm to 4pm	
Saturday	5 pm	
Sunday (early)	8:30 am	
Sunday (mid)		11 am

Current schedule considerations

The current schedule for the central rotation is over-weighted on both Saturday evening and Sunday morning. Although the new living arrangements will not appreciably affect this rotation (current arrangements have a priest living at Saint Joseph – the proposed arrangements have all priests living at Queen of Angels), the schedule requires that the priest not only sacrifice pastoral time before his first Masses on Saturday and Sunday, but that he offer two vigil Masses on Saturday evening (at the locations that happen to be closest to each other, no less). Moreover, the earlier vigil Mass is **outside** of the canonically determined window for vigil Masses (4:30 pm or later). Finally, the mid-morning Sunday Mass at Saint Joseph is the only one that occurs at 11:30 am.

Proposed schedule considerations

- The proposed confession time allows for **1)** standardization across locations, **2)** maintains period of pastoral presence & prayer before Mass, and **3)** allows the possibility of expansion of confession times during holy seasons or as needed (3 pm to 4:30 pm) without sacrificing the 30 minute period of pastoral presence & prayer before Mass.
- The proposed vigil Mass schedule (removing a vigil Mass from the central rotation – and re-scheduling both locations to 5 pm) allows for slightly longer confession times AND a pastoral time & prayer before Mass.
- The proposed reschedule of the 9 am Mass to 8:30 am (Queen of Angels) and the 11:30 am Mass to 11 am (Saint Joseph) allows for the standardization of all Sunday Masses while preventing any need for further changes to **any** of the Sunday morning Masses across all locations at this time.

Deep dive analysis: East side rotation (Saint Joseph & Saint Mary)

Current schedule

East side rotation	
Saint Mary Star of the Sea	
Confessions	3:45-4:15pm (Sat)
Saturday	4:30 pm
Sunday (early)	8:30 am (Spanish)
Sunday (mid)	11 am

Proposed schedule

East side rotation		
	Saint Joseph	Saint Mary Star of the Sea
Confessions	3 pm to 4 pm	10 to 11 am (Sat)
Saturday	5 pm	
Sunday (early)		8:30 am (Spanish)
Sunday (mid)		11 am

Current schedule considerations

The current schedule for the east side rotation depends on the assignment of a single priest living on-site at Saint Mary. Additionally, evening confessions are scheduled such that there is insufficient time for pastoral priestly presence and prayer.

Proposed schedule considerations

- The proposed vigil Mass schedule **1)** minimizes Mass cancellations while **2)** preserving the majority of the current Masses at both Saint Joseph (see previous page) and Saint Mary, and **3)** sustaining the Sunday Mass schedule & communities (English & Spanish) at both locations.
- The proposed **maintaining** of the Sunday Mass schedule (happily) matches a standardization of Mass times without any need to disrupt the current practice. The split of Saint Joseph Masses between rotation schedules (central & east) helps emphasize Saint Mary's new part of a larger community (the parish family) – something that may prove to be especially challenging as it is the only community that has not (ever?) been part of multi-location arrangement.
- The overall schedule for the east side rotation lends itself to substitute priests staying at Saint Joseph rectory (the Saturday morning Mass & confession would be covered by assigned priests).

Updated proposal changes after consultation with admin staff & deacons (May 8, 2024)

- (re)added Saturday evening confessions at Saint Joseph given that priest will already be present at Saturday vigil, helping to minimize initial changes to current schedule/practices

Current daily Mass schedule

	Saint Anne	Saint Thomas	Queen of Angels	Saint Joseph	Saint Mary Star of the Sea
Monday					12 pm
Tuesday					
Wednesday	5:30 pm		12 pm		5:30 pm
Thursday	12:05 pm		8:30 am (school)		12 pm
Friday	12:05 pm			8:30 am	12 pm
Saturday (morn)				9 am	9 am

Benefits

- remote locations have 3+ daily Masses
- school Mass is offered weekly
- St. Mary has Mass nearly every day (excepting priest's day off)
- variable times (potentially) allow for different demographic appeal

Challenges

- Mass schedules rely on a priest living at each of the remote locations (Forks & Port Townsend)
 - o evening Masses are unsustainable – particularly given bad weather conditions – with priests driving 1+ hours
- Mass schedules vary wildly across the parish family
- any rotation of priests for daily Masses becomes practically impossible to reconcile with office hours/appointments
 - o this is especially crucial for the pastor, who – in this schedule – is locked in to a specific location three of the four days of the common work week (excluding his day off and Saturdays).
- The school Mass schedule limits priest presence to students unless two priests binate (preventing funerals & other Masses that day)
- The two Saturday morning Masses are at one end of the parish family
 - o at least one priest will be driving in excess of 3 hours in one day every Saturday, given weekend rotation

Proposed daily Mass schedule

	Saint Anne	Saint Thomas	Queen of Angels	Saint Joseph	Saint Mary Star of the Sea
Monday					12:00 pm
Tuesday			9:30 am	9:30 am	
Wednesday	12:00 pm				12:00 pm
Thursday	12:00 pm			9:30 am	
Friday			9:30 am (school)		
Saturday (morn)				9:30 am	9:30 am

Benefits

- all locations have equal daily Masses offered
- school Mass is offered weekly
- all priests can concelebrate the school Mass
 - o **Note from Father Maurer:** Regular priestly presence to our school children by **all** parish family priests is a major priority
- having a Saturday morning Mass at Saint Mary allows for a priest to be present for Saturday confessions without an extra trip
- maintaining a maximum of two Masses per weekday across the parish family allows for a priest – particularly the pastor – to ‘float’ where he may be needed administratively or otherwise
- maintaining a maximum of two daily Masses across the parish family allows for a priest – particularly the pastor – to concelebrate with another priest, maximizing potential priest-parishioner relationship-building across parishes

Challenges

- the most remote locations are most affected by Mass cancellations
- finding standardized Mass times has yet to be determined
 - o office hours and faith formation program times need to be taken into consideration
 - o council meeting times need to be determined
 - o expectations around priestly presence on-campus (office hours & appointments) and off-campus (ie, home visits) need to be explored and determined

Updated proposal changes after consultation with admin staff & deacons (May 8, 2024)

- school Mass moved to Friday, moved Forks & Sequim Masses to Thursday, added Saturday morning Mass to Sequim

Proposed holy day Mass schedule

	West side rotation		Central rotation		East side rotation
	Saint Anne	Saint Thomas	Queen of Angels	Saint Joseph	Saint Mary Star of the Sea
Vigil	6:30 pm (Spanish)		6:30 pm		6:30 pm
Daytime	12 pm			9:30 am	12 pm
Evening		6:30 pm		6:30 pm	6:30 pm (Spanish)

New proposal created after consultation with council chairs (May 20, 2024)

Benefits

- all locations have at least one holy day Mass
- Spanish Masses are offered at both locations with weekly Spanish Masses
- Spanish Masses are offered at work-friendly times
- School children can attend Mass on a holy day during school hours
- Where a location only offers one Mass, it is at a work-friendly time
- Daytime Masses on holy days take place of daily Mass

Challenges

- Saint Joseph has no daytime holy day Mass
- There are no daytime holy day Masses in Spanish

Updated proposal changes after consultation with admin staff & deacons (May 20, 2024)

- Moved daytime holy day Mass from Queen of Angels to Saint Joseph

Proposed weekday confessions schedule

	Saint Anne	Saint Thomas	Queen of Angels	Saint Joseph	Saint Mary Star of the Sea
Monday					12:30 – 1:30 pm
Tuesday			10 – 11 am	10 – 11 am	
Wednesday	12:30 – 1:30 pm				
Thursday	Reserved for funeral Mass needs (no scheduled daytime confessions)				
Friday					

New proposal created after consultation with admin team & council chairs (May 20, 2024)

Benefits

- Confessions offered at all parishes
- Confessions being offered on days when funerals are NOT offered means less likelihood of unexpected/irregular cancellations
 - o **Note from Father Maurer:** Confessions may always be heard upon request – it will be important for priests and parishioners alike to be open to *ad hoc* requesting of confession, with the understanding that the sacrament should be offered whenever feasible even if not regularly scheduled

Challenges

- No scheduled confession times at Saint Thomas mission
- Due to travel considerations & priest presence at school drop-off, confession times must be AFTER daily Mass

Putting it all together: what would look like in practice

Sunday Mass rotation

	1st weekends	2nd weekends	3rd weekends	4th weekends	5th weekends
Father Ed	West (SA/ST)	West (SA/ST)	Central (QA/SJ)	East (SJ/SM)	West (SA/ST)
Father Gali	East (SJ/SM)	East (SJ/SM)	West (SA/ST)	Central (QA/SJ)	East (SJ/SM)
Father Maurer	Central (QA/SJ)	Central (QA/SJ)	East (SJ/SM)	West (SA/ST)	Central (QA/SJ)

Weekday Mass rotation

	Saint Anne	Saint Thomas	Queen of Angels	Saint Joseph	Saint Mary Star of the Sea
Monday					Father Maurer
Tuesday			Father Ed	Father Gali	
Wednesday	Father Ed				Frs. Gali & Maurer
Thursday	Frs. Ed & Maurer			Father Gali	
Friday			2-3x priests (school)		
Saturday (morn)				Weekend (central)	Weekend (east)

Updated proposal changes after consultation with admin staff & deacons (May 8, 2024)

- Friday school Mass, Thursday Forks & Sequim Masses, Saturday morning Sequim Mass, Saturday Sequim confessions

Final thoughts from Father Maurer

Mass scheduling flexibility is limited by the distances involved, the location of the priests' residence, and the need for the presence of not only priest ministry but the pastor to make regular weekly rotation among the parishes during the first year(s) of *Partners in the Gospel*.

It is my thought that these Mass changes could be sustained during the larger discernment process of *Partners in the Gospel* (up to the full 3 years). Barring unexpected developments, only the weekend Mass schedule would need to change at the end of that discernment process when the long-term decision of the number of priests assigned to the Olympic Peninsula is determined by the chancery & archbishop.