

Priest coverage contingency plans

Baseline facts¹

As of the writing of this document, we have three Masses in the east region (Port Townsend) with a rough total of 300 parishioners per weekend, four Masses in the central region (Sequim & Port Angeles) with a rough total of 850 parishioners per weekend, and three Masses in the west region (Forks & Clallam Bay) with a rough total of 125 parishioners per weekend.

- The seating capacity of Saint Mary Star of the Sea in Port Townsend is ~300
- The seating capacity of Saint Joseph in Sequim is ~300
- The seating capacity of Queen of Angels is ~350
- The seating capacity of Saint Anne parish in Forks is ~125

Principles

Due to geographic restrictions (drive times, primarily), three priests live one within each region, allowing for 3-4 Masses per region. From a purely cost-effective analysis around priest Mass capacity (1 priest = 1 vigil/3 Sunday Masses), the current Mass schedule involves excess Masses but is the most practical of all scenarios involving three priests regularly serving in this region.

Should we be reduced to two priests – temporarily or long-term – for any reason, several principles come into the fore:

1. restructuring Masses offered such as to **maximize the number of people served**
2. centralizing priests to allow for **maximum priestly availability** to the greatest areas of need (population centers, medical/emergency calls, staff support & needs)
3. centralizing priests to allow for **maximum flexibility of coverage**

Conclusions

- due to population centers and church capacity considerations, the central region Masses becomes the highest priority
- geographical restrictions (for parishioners driving to Mass and priests driving to locations) demand that a minimal – but non-zero wherever possible – number of Masses be offered in the east and west regions

¹ Numbers need verification – solicit averages from 2025 May & October Mass counts

Priest coverage contingency plans

Current Mass schedule (three priests)

East region – **Priest #1**

- 5 pm vigil Mass
- 8:30 am Sunday Mass [Spanish]
- 11 am Sunday Mass

Central region – **Priest #2**

- 5 pm vigil Mass (QA)
- 8:30 am Sunday Mass (QA)
- 11 am Sunday Mass (SJ)
- 1 pm Sunday Mass (SJ)

West region – **Priest #3**

- 6 pm vigil Mass [Spanish] (SA)
- 8:30 am Sunday Mass (SA)
- 11 am Sunday Mass (ST)

Modified Mass schedule (two priests)

East region – **Priest #1**

- 5 pm vigil Mass
- 8:30 am Sunday Mass [Spanish]
- ~~11 am Sunday Mass~~

Central region – **Priest #1 & #2**

- 5 pm vigil Mass (QA) - **#2**
- 8:30 am Sunday Mass (QA) **#2**
- 11 am Sunday Mass (SJ) **#1**
- 1 pm Sunday Mass (SJ) **#1**

West region – **Priest #2**

- ~~6 pm vigil Mass [Spanish] (SA)~~
- ~~8:30 am Sunday Mass (SA)~~
- ~~11 am Sunday Mass (ST)~~
- 12 pm Sunday Mass (SA)

For weekends, the modified schedule **requires** that

- priest #1 starts in Port Townsend and ends in Sequim
- priest #2 starts in Port Angeles and ends in Forks

For medium or long-term contingencies, the following is also **necessary**

- both priest #1 & #2 reside in the central region
 - either both at the Port Angeles rectory or one there and the other in Sequim
- priest #2 starts in Port Angeles and ends in Forks
- priest #1 & #2 have different days off

Priest coverage contingency plans

Emergency coverage plan (one priest)

Should we reach a point where only one priest is available for ministry, a balance must be struck between three competing principles:

- offering the most Masses to the most people within a priest's canonical limits
- offering Mass to the most regions feasibly possible
- maintaining as sustainable a schedule as possible for one priest to fulfill

There is no one perfect – or even good – plan for a single priest serving the Olympic Peninsula. The following is proposed as an initial starting place for discernment within what is hoped will be a never-explored situation.

Emergency Mass schedule (one priest)

East region

- 5 pm vigil Mass

Central region

- 8:30 am Sunday Mass (SJ)
- 11 am Sunday Mass (QA)

West region

- 2:30 pm Sunday Mass (SA)

For weekends, the emergency schedule **requires** that

- the priest starts in Port Townsend and ends in Forks
 - depending on Forks attendance, it may be better to offer *no* Mass in Forks and instead offer a 1 pm Sunday Mass at Queen of Angels

For medium or long-term contingencies, the following is also **necessary**

- the priest resides in the central region, likely Port Angeles (close to hospital & staff)