



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

## DIocese of YOUNGSTOWN

September 20, 2017

Dear Monsignor, Father, or Parish Leader,

Following the discussions on Parish Leaders and potential Mass time changes at the Priests' Convocation, I wanted to update everyone on what was discussed and the plans moving forward. On Thursday morning at the Convocation we were visited by a priest and two Parish Leaders from the Diocese of Buffalo. We heard their stories, took time for discussion at our tables, and had the opportunity to ask questions of the priest and Parish Leaders from Buffalo.

The afternoon began with a presentation of three plans by the Office of Evangelization and Pastoral Planning to move forward implementing Mass time changes in a coordinated effort throughout the diocese. We then met by deanery to discuss these options and submit feedback.

The next step is to have **each parish record accurate weekend Saturday Vigil and Sunday Mass attendance counts every week, beginning the weekend of Saturday, September 30<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, October 1<sup>st</sup>**. Parishes are asked to submit to the Office of Evangelization and Pastoral Planning by Friday, November 3<sup>rd</sup> the number of people at each Mass for the five weekends in October (Sept. 30<sup>th</sup>/Oct. 1<sup>st</sup> through Oct. 28/29). Please continue to keep records of Mass attendance and submit the form monthly. Many parishes have already put weekly counts into practice and have found it helpful and not overly burdensome. There is an enclosed form for the five weekends in October as well as a general form that can be copied and used each month.

In November, each deanery will meet to review the Mass attendance numbers, as well as other information, such as population projections, and begin to formulate a Mass time plan for their area.

This fall, the Presbyteral Council and the deans will take time at their meetings to discuss and finalize the details of when and how these changes will occur, including how to best communicate these changes to the faithful in a constructive, effective way. A similar discussion was held at a recent Diocesan Pastoral Council meeting.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact me or Pete Schafer. Thank you for your diligent effort in supporting this important process of diocese-wide planning to strengthen and improve our ability to minister to the people of God.

In Christ,

Most Reverend Bishop George Murry, SJ  
Bishop of Youngstown

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