

Father's Notes

October 13, 2024

As you know, up to this point, for our eight Sunday Masses, Father Ben and I have been alternating each week, back and forth, since we started in July. Honestly, it's a little disorienting and destabilizing for me, like watching a video, where the scene changes every five seconds. Starting in October, we're taking a different approach. Each of us will stay with the same Sunday Mass schedule for the calendar month.

Thus, for all Sundays in October, I will be at St. Philomena: (Sat) 5:30pm; (Sun) St. Thomas 8:30am and 10:30am; and St. Philomena 5:00pm. Father Ben will be at St. Thomas (Sat) 5:00pm; (Sun) St. Philomena 8:30am, 10:30am and 1:00pm. We will switch for November and again with months that follow. I hope it helps us all feel a bit more stabilized.

Another thing we are discerning is regarding Holy Days of Obligation, and specifically, how to best accommodate the two languages for which we offer Mass. I think back to August 15, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, when we had English Mass in the morning and bilingual Masses in the evening at both St. Thomas and St. Philomena.

I believe that the majority of people who attend our Holy Days of Obligation, are willing to attend bilingual Mass in the evening, because that's what is offered. Nonetheless, I also believe that same majority of people would prefer to have Mass in the language they're used using for Mass, whether Spanish or English.

Since July 1st, we are trying to begin thinking about what it means to be a family of parishes that operates in two sites. Yet I realize that most of us don't think that way yet. Most of us still think in terms of either being a St. Thomas person or a St. Philomena person, and thus the idea of traveling from one place to another doesn't enter our thought for consideration or perhaps even feel right. Father Ben and I, consulting with staff and other members of the community, are asking about a different approach to Holy Days of Obligation (such as All Saints, Mary Mother of God, etc.). Again, because people tend to have work obligations on these Holy Days, we have a responsibility to provide Mass in the evening.

With this in mind, because we are functioning on two sites, and because we offer Mass to a large population in both Spanish and English, we are discerning having one site offer the evening Mass in Spanish and the other offering the evening Mass in English. Again, this would require broadening our vision about being more than just St. Thomas or just St. Philomena. I ask for your prayerful openness to this, if and when it becomes our shared reality.



Father Todd O. Strange (*Pastor*)

+ St. Philomena Parish & School (*Des Moines, WA*)

+ St. Thomas Parish (*Tukwila, WA*)