

MASS SCHEDULE REVIEW – OUTCOME

PPC UPDATE TO PARISH 6/7 JULY 2024

The current schedule started this January with an agreement to run it for three months before reviewing. In April the PPC advised the schedule would remain until July to get a sample during the colder months and also include the annual May census.

Numbers at each weekend Mass have been recorded since January. Importantly, across the four weekends of May the annual Mass attendance Census was conducted in line with Diocesan requirements. This is particularly useful since we have Census numbers for each May going back many years to provide an apples for apples comparison.

Looking at the last five censuses, it is no surprise to see a 15% reduction in attendances from 2019 to 2021 given the impact of COVID. There was no Census in 2020 due to pandemic restrictions.

Interestingly the last four years have seen negligible change. Each of these last four years have seen average weekly attendances in the 330's.

Last year the average was 337 and this year 335. A difference of only two persons a week, including the loss of the discontinued Saturday Vigil at Our Lady of the Way.

It appears that while some parishioners have been attending different Masses, overall, we have held remarkably strong for a number of years.

For those interested, printed copies of this presentation are available after Mass and on the parish website. They include a table of the last five Census records.

AVERAGE WEEKLY ATTENDANCE: MAY CENSUS

			2019	2021	2022	2023	2024
OLW	6:00PM	N/A	38	26	35	27	NA
OLW	10:00AM	9:00AM	84	74	64	65	73
SPC	8:00AM	7:30AM	58	46	55	56	63
NAT	6:00PM	6:00PM	77	60	62	77	84
NAT	9:00AM	11:00AM	137	128	119	112	115
TOTAL			394	334	335	337	335

But attendance data is only one consideration. Two weeks ago, we engaged in a series of “Listening Sessions” at each church. These sessions provided parishioners an opportunity to express their thoughts and feeling not only on the Mass schedule but also on community engagement and their own gifts and talents.

Our thanks go to the many of you who took the time to participate. Thanks also to the many who chose to provide input via the paper forms and email.

With the immediate focus is on Mass times, key takeouts from the Listening Sessions include:

- An appreciation that all churches have a Sunday Mass
- A request for Liturgy of the Word as an option to a Mass.
- Regular comments that previous Mass times at all churches were preferred.
- A wide sense of overall satisfaction in consideration of the practicalities
- Some willingness to be flexible for the good of the whole parish
- A dissatisfaction by a good number of those who previously attended Nativity at 9:00am
- There are also those who welcomed the Nativity 11:00am Mass, as they did other Mass times.

On Monday the PPC met to consider all the information we had before us. Listening Session input and attendance data included.

Some essential criteria were established that any schedule needs to meet.

1. Every church in the parish will have a Sunday morning Mass
2. Regular supply priests are not available as an option
3. Liturgy of the Word is not an option since it does not meet the Catholic obligation to attend Sunday Mass
4. Our priest must travel in a continuous “out and back” loop with no backtracking.

Following more than two hours of vigorous discussion, discernment and exploring it was resolved the current Mass schedule would be adopted for the long term. There will be no change to the schedule.

While recognising the arguments for a 9:00am Mass at Nativity, the practicalities make that unviable.

In the end it was a close call, but a majority of members supported the decision.

We know this outcome will disappoint some and at the same time be welcomed by others. This is inevitable given the complexities involved.

We acknowledge that the range of perspectives and feelings are valid and can assure you all options were thoroughly considered.

We now look forward to building on the many great strengths and assets within the Holy Family Parish.

I thank you for your time today.