

Dear Parishioners,

As I converse with many of you, I hear similar questions. I have developed a list of responses to explain the direction of our two parishes, Holy Cross and Our Mother of Sorrows. Please join me in sharing this information among your family and friends. Please share with me other questions you may have and I will do my best to respond. I also invite all the members of our two parishes to continue to work together in building a Bridge to Christ. In Christ,

Fr. William G. Coffas

Pastor of Our Mother of Sorrows + Holy Cross

Q. When did we become two parishes that are clustered?

A. In spring of 2020 Bishop Matano appointed Fr. Coffas the pastor of Holy Cross Parish along with renewing him as the pastor of Our Mother of Sorrows. When one pastor is appointed to serve two parishes that creates a cluster.

Q. Why do we need to cluster?

A. There are fewer priests to serve as pastors of parishes. Having a pastor lead more than one parish allows for a continuing of the Church's mission. This arrangement is not new in our diocese and often has added vitality to the communities involved. For example, the majority of assignments that Fr. Coffas had previously, have been in clustered parishes. He has served in clusters of two churches, and up to as many as six churches spread out over an entire county. Although the primary reason to cluster is not financial, parishes that share clergy and other staff also benefit from reduction in payroll costs.

Q. Since we have one pastor, are Holy Cross and Our Mother of Sorrows one parish now?

A. While our two parishes are served by one pastor, they are two separate entities legally, financially, and in terms of Canon Law. However, while remaining separate entities, both parishes can be enriched by sharing activities and celebrations throughout the year.

Q. Is there a plan to close one of the churches?

A. No. There is no plan to close Holy Cross or Our Mother of Sorrows. Both parishes are serving the needs of the community and closing is not even being considered.

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A. No. There is no plan to close Holy Cross School which is doing an amazing job of meeting the faith formation and educational needs of our children in the community. Enrollment in our school has remained steady. Thanks to the generous support of parents, parishioners, and the Diocese of Rochester our school will continue its mission of preparing children of faith and learning.

Q. Why are we sharing a bulletin among the two parishes?

A. Sharing a bulletin provides a way to communicate to all our parishioners and to encourage them to participate in the various liturgies and other activities that occur at both parishes. In addition, maintaining, designing, editing, and receiving two different bulletins from the publisher required many hours of work for staff members. One bulletin allows for enhanced communication and staff efficiency.

Q. Why is one financial office being set up?

A. Throughout the diocese, parishes are deciding to establish shared financial offices. A shared financial office for accounting procedures allows for necessary staff back up, internal controls, and needed efficiency. Bringing our financial team members together allows for other valuable office space to be used for direct ministry. Parish leadership in both parishes have given their support to establishing a shared financial office in 2021.

Q. Why was the Daily Mass schedule changed?

A. Prior to this change, our two parishes had five different daily Mass times. To minimize confusion and stress, the change was made to standardize Mass times while also offering the liturgies at various times throughout the week. Another factor that impacted this change is the fact that we average a total of 160 funerals between our two churches each year. A funeral is an opportunity to minister to a grieving family and also reminds them that the Church is here for them. Both Our Mother of Sorrows and Holy Cross have a long history of never refusing a funeral, but rather welcoming the bereaved and ministering to them while commending them to God's love and mercy.

Q. Will the weekend Mass schedule change?

A. No. There is no plan to change the current schedule at the two churches.

Q. Why is the 8AM Saturday morning Mass at OMOS?

A. People come from many parishes for this Mass. It regularly has a large congregation representing nearly 10 different parishes. Since OMOS can accommodate a larger gathering of people, it is a good setting. At the Saturday morning Mass, the Church invokes the intercession of Mary, Our Mother, and so it is fitting to gather in the church dedicated to her.