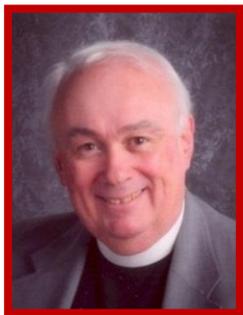


# THOUGHTS FROM THE TOWER



The process of yoking our three Barrier Island parishes continues. It will be much better for it to continue on a gradual basis as it has over the past several years. We should not hold on all the remaining changes – and they are significant – until I retire in June. To have them all happen at once would make for a much more difficult adjustment than to continue step by step.

So you will see elsewhere on this website / in this bulletin a message from Tim Murphy who has served for several years now as our tri-parish director for Outreach to those in need. Up till now we have had two centers, one at Saint Ignatius Martyr and one at Saint Mary of the Isle. Our Saint Vincent de Paul Society already serves the barrier island as one unity with Vincentian Volunteers from the three parishes. Now the Outreach volunteers from the three parishes will also operate out of one center to serve the whole island. That center will be at Saint Mary's for two reasons: it is a more central location for the entire island and the number of those in need is much higher in the Saint Mary's area than here in the West End or the Atlantic Beaches. I am very grateful to the Outreach volunteers from our parish who see the need for this adjustment and will continue their valued service.

The second adjustment will take place right after Candlemas, in the beginning of February. Our three parishes will change to a new Mass schedule that, while it's starting in February, will be based on the reality that beginning in June Father Brian and Father Anthony will be the only two priests assigned to serve on the Barrier Island. Therefore there will be only two Sunday morning Masses in each of the parishes. The times will be arranged so that Mass will be available throughout the morning somewhere on our island, but each parish will no longer have three Masses. Our three Pastoral Councils are still working out the exact schedule which will be announced soon.

This change will be a real challenge. Many families or individuals have been participating in a particular Mass every Sunday for decades. They will find it difficult no longer to have it available – at least not in their home parish. It will be a challenge for just two priests to cover the six Masses that will be spread throughout the three parishes. Time of each Mass will need to be set so as enable them to do this.

Allow me to be blunt. The person who insists, "I want my Mass in my parish at the time I've always gone" either cannot do simple math (2 priests for 6 Masses in 3 parishes), or is putting one's own desires above the needs of everyone else. I'm sure there will be no such person among our parishioners.

But I do realize that this change will be difficult and even painful for many. We need to support one another through a difficult time of change.

As soon as the consultation process is complete, we will announce the new schedule and the reasons for why each parish's two Masses will be at specific times.

That announcement will also show how the cut-back in weekday Masses will happen. The one thing I can assure everyone is that there will be at least one Mass every weekday in at least one of the three parishes.

*Father Donald*