

Dear Parents of First Communicants:

The Renew My Church (RMC) process has reconfigured the parishes to our north (Divine Infant and Divine Providence in Westchester), to our east (St. Louise De Marillac in LaGrange Park and St. Barbara in Brookfield), and this month the parishes and schools to our southwest in Lemont. While I do not envision the same outcome for our grouping of parishes and schools any time soon, RMC has taught us that business as usual is no longer possible. This, in part, was the rationale behind the change in Mass schedule last Pentecost, enabling us to better coordinate activities and ministries with our RMC grouping parishes: St. Cletus and St. Francis Xavier in LaGrange.

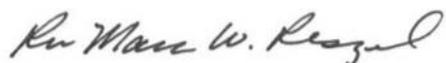
The liturgical documents call the Eucharist the source and summit of the Christian Life. By extension then, the Sunday Mass is the source and summit of our parish life. This is St. John of the Cross at our best. A stated goal of our pastoral staff is to connect our parish activities and ministries to the Sunday Masses.

For years the Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults and the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick have been celebrated at Sunday Masses. Recently, the integration of our school community with the daily Mass and the inclusion of pre-Confirmation rituals including the 7th grade commitment ceremony and the 8th grade sponsor meeting with the weekend Masses have gone smoothly. Unfortunately, the proposal to celebrate First Communions as part of the scheduled Masses has not gone smoothly. Since the unity intended to be celebrated in this initiation sacrament has been jeopardized, I hope to ease the transition regarding the scheduling of First Communions.

Please know that all sacramental celebrations, including First Communion, are special. As is our tradition, our liturgies are reverent, respectful, prayerful and beautiful. For those who are comfortable with celebrating First Communion at the parish Mass on April 25-26 or May 2-3 that you selected, no action is required. Any family not yet comfortable with this change, the option of an added concelebrated Mass at 11:00am on Saturday, May 2 will now be available. Interested parents should contact Janet Caschetta, Director of Youth Catechesis, at jcaschetta@stjohnofthecross.org with your preference by the end of November.

I recognize that change, while inevitable, can be difficult. I regret that this matter was not handled and communicated more effectively. Our parish staff will learn from this and we will continue to evaluate the best ways to achieve our goals for the long-term vitality of St. John of the Cross Parish. As a parish community we need to be unified to live out the core of our mission, that is Jesus whose Body we receive and become in Holy Communion. I look forward to welcoming your child to the Eucharistic banquet and remain committed to pastoring our vibrant faith community.

Sincerely,



Rev. Marc W. Reszel