



Saint Mary Mother of God Catholic Church

22 July 2022

Dear Friends,

Today, Cardinal Gregory issued a Decree promulgating norms for the implementation of Pope Francis' wishes regarding the celebration of the mass according to the 1962 Missal. I received a copy of the decree through official channels yesterday evening. These norms will profoundly impact the life of our parish community.

As of Sept. 21 St. Mary's will cease to celebrate the extraordinary form of the mass, also known as the *traditional latin mass*, that is according to the 1962 missal. These celebrations will be moved to the Franciscan Monastery in Brookland. The schedule for that new arrangement and all the details will be worked out by the clergy of the Archdiocese under the direction of Msgr. Charles Pope, who has been named the Cardinal's delegate for these matters.

THE PARISH CALENDAR HERE REMAINS EXACTLY THE SAME UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

In the coming weeks I will pray, meet with our Finance Council, and consult with parishioners to discern the best course of action for the ongoing proclamation of the Gospel here at St. Mary's in Chinatown. I encourage anyone with concerns to reach out and remember that my door is always open. I direct your attention to the text of His Eminence's Decree and remind you that, as always you have the right to communicate with Church leaders in a charitable way.

For parishioners (about half our population) who are devoted to the pre-conciliar mass, this will be a terrible spiritual burden. There are many facets to that burden: the basic comforts of a routine changed; feelings of alienation from the center of church life that is the parish; a sense of betrayal from on high; and much much more. I support our Holy Father's goals as outlined in his Apostolic Letter *Desidero Desideravi*, and I support our Cardinal Archbishop's goal (outlined in his decree) of united worship even if the options exercised to reach those goals test our understanding. At the exact same time that I support and obey our leaders I want to embrace each of you in your distress and to sit with you in the ashes of mourning I know you feel so deeply. I too feel that mourning: At every step I've advocated for your desires and needs. I've searched and worked every angle I could think of to avoid this radical shift in your experience. The terms of the decree will demand that I revisit even the contingency plans we've begun to explore here

at St. Mary's... I am, further, profoundly disappointed that these decisions have been made by people who have never once come to our parish to see the beautiful, fruitful and faithful life we live here, all in accord with the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and united to the life of the local Church in DC.

All that being said the regulation of worship is the prerogative of the Archbishop and certainly of the Holy Father in Rome. This particular regulation comes from Pope Francis' concern for the overall implementation of the Council and Cardinal Gregory's concern for unity of worship: both good and holy motives. And so we are obliged to mortify our understanding and our will and obey. In so doing we will win innumerable graces for the Church. In the weeks that follow turn to the Cross... to the Scriptures and to the lives of the saints to keep you on track as you process your feelings. They will not lead you astray. And lastly, know that I love you and want so much to be here for you.

Ever your pastor,
Fr. De Rosa