

- By now most of you know that the Latin Mass will be cancelled in parish churches throughout the diocese, including St. Ann's, effective July 8, 2025. If you've not seen the letter yet, it's on our social media pages and the *Catholic News Herald* website.
- Bishop Martin made this decision in order to complete the diocese's implementation of *Traditiones Custodes*, a motu proprio promulgated by Pope Francis that reimposed restrictions on the celebration of the Traditional Latin Mass.
- In lieu of Latin Masses in parish churches, Bishop Martin has designated a chapel owned by the diocese located in Mooresville, North Carolina, as the new site for the Latin Mass.
- Incidentally, this property was the original site of Christ the King High School. The chapel's name is still to be determined.
- A priest of our diocese will be appointed as chaplain to this chapel, who will offer two Masses every Sunday and holy days of obligation.
- However, those attending the Latin Mass at this chapel will remain parishioners of their current parishes, where they will continue to receive their Sacraments. At this time, there are no plans for Latin Masses on weekdays.
- While parishes such as ours were originally given an extension to continue offering the Latin Mass until October of this year, Bishop Martin wishes to start the chapel at the same time as new priestly assignments begin – which is usually the week after the 4th of July.
- To ensure that this chapel gets a good start attendance-wise, the bishop believes it best to eliminate the Latin Masses in parish churches at the same time this new chapel opens. This is why he is cutting short our permission to continue with the Latin Mass until October.
- As you can imagine, I am heartbroken by this news, as I know so many of you are. The Latin Mass has been a tremendous source of blessings for so many of us at St. Ann's, and I will miss terribly celebrating it publicly.
- After Pope Benedict lifted restrictions on the celebration of the Latin Mass with his 2007 motu proprio *Summorum Pontificam*, St. Ann's was the first parish in the diocese to offer regular Latin Masses, and in so many ways our parish has embodied well the “mutual enrichment” Pope Benedict hoped for between the Latin Mass and the Novus Ordo.
- Yet, despite any negative feelings we may be feeling, we must be grateful for the blessings our parish has experienced over the past 17 years we've been blessed to offer the Latin Mass. It has enriched, inspired, and edified so many of us.
- For many of us, the Latin Mass has been a source of conversion and healing. For me personally, the Latin Mass has been a tremendous liturgical formator. I've come to a much fuller understanding of the liturgy through celebrating the Latin Mass.
- Though we feel acutely the loss of the TLM, we must remain faithful sons and daughters of Holy Mother Church, and faithful subjects of our bishop. Indeed, bitterness and despair must find no place in our hearts.
- And we must see in this suffering an opportunity to grow in greater virtue and holiness. Our blessed Lord permits difficulties and hardships in our lives precisely to give us opportunities to grow in greater virtue!
- Truly, moments of hardship define our character. Although this news may feel a bit like a sucker punch, I do believe it's a moment of grace. A hard grace to be sure, but a grace nonetheless that can help us grow in holiness.

- As we experience the hardship of losing something so beautiful, we need to decide what parish we're going to be.
- For so many years, St. Ann's has been well-known even outside of our diocese. We're well known for our beauty and for the Latin Mass. We've been written about in books, in academic journals, and many blogs.
- Now, we must reforge our identity a bit. While we will always be well-known for the beauty of our church, I want us to be well-known for the beauty of our virtue as a parish. I want people to be edified by the response our parish makes to this difficult news.
- So let me give you some thoughts: First, don't allow whatever anger you're feeling to be sinful. There is a place for just anger over this situation, but your anger should not get the better of you or lead you to make imprudent, brash, or judgmental comments.
- It is perfectly fine to disagree with the bishop and to reach out to him. But do it respectfully, charitably, and without judgment for his motives. Traditionally-minded Catholics are often caricatured as being angry and judgmental. Do not prove this stereotype to be true!!
- Second, let's not focus on what's being taken away, but focus on what we're being given: an opportunity to suffer a deprivation for Christ.
- See in this deprivation the scalpel of the Divine Physician, Who wishes to cut away some of our cancerous sinfulness. See in this deprivation the chisel of the Divine Sculptor, Who wishes to fashion each of us into a beautiful icon of holiness.
- You've heard me say this a hundred times from this pulpit, but it bears worth repeating: our humble embrace of the cross leads to holiness. There is always virtue to be had by suffering well, by suffering with faith, hope, and love.
- If you really want to suffer *well* with this cross, then thank God for it. When we are grateful for our crosses, it is then that those crosses really transform us. Gratitude for suffering is a sign of our deep faith in God's providential care – and it doesn't go unnoticed by God.
- Lastly, let us pray and fast that God's will is done with this situation and with our parish.
- Pray that our Lord will bless our bishop. It's easy to criticize a priest or bishop when he makes a decision you don't like. But can you get past your anger to pray and fast for him?
- Understand, brothers and sisters, that your prayers for us make a difference. They procure for us so many graces that enable us to be the leaders you need us to be.
- And pray, too, that the freedom with the Latin Mass we enjoyed under Pope Benedict XVI will be restored someday soon, for so much good fruit came from it.
- As always, I am ever grateful to this parish for the steadfast Christian witness you provide. I'm grateful for your prayers and sacrifices for me. They sustain me more than you know.
- Let us carry each other in prayer in these difficult days, trusting always that, if we place all our hopes in God, He will bring a greater good out of our sufferings.
- Our Lady, Mother of the Church, pray for us. St. Joseph, pray for us. St. Ann, pray for us.