

- When I first entered seminary in 1993, I quickly came to know a convent of Poor Clares in Washington, DC, who had an Adoration chapel very near our seminary. In my 9 years of living in Washington, I regularly made holy hours there.
- When let in the door by the sister who was the portress, I was often asked to pray that they would get vocations for their community. Yet, in all their years of prayer and sacrifice in Washington, DC, this community never gained one single vocation, and they closed in 2017.
- The lack of vocations and the closing of this monastery has been a great mystery to me. Why did God not bless this enterprise that seemed to bear so much good fruit, especially when so many good people were praying for it?
- The Poor Clares in Washington, DC, were great women doing great things for the Lord's Kingdom, and yet He did not bless them, even at the behest of so many prayers.
- As we come to our penultimate Sunday Latin Mass here at St. Ann's, perhaps we're facing a similar mystery. The Latin Mass in our parish has borne great fruit, and so many of us have been praying to keep it here. Yet, our Lord hasn't answered this prayer as we hoped.
- Obviously, this is a time of mourning for many of us. Personally, I'm feeling a great amount of sadness. I don't mind telling you that losing this Mass that I've come to love so much over the past 17 years grieves me greatly.
- In addition simply to being beautiful and well-ordered, the Latin Mass has been a teacher, a formator for me. It's made me a better priest and given me a whole new respect and awe for the liturgy that was never communicated to me in my seminary studies.
- Yet, sadness must never have the last word for any Christian. For we are fundamentally a people of hope, a people who trust in God's providence. And whatever God's providence allows is the very best thing for our souls.
- Ever since Pope Francis promulgated *Traditiones Custodes* over 4 years ago, we've lived with a certain anxiety that our parish would ultimately lose the Latin Mass. Now, it seems that Providence is allowing our fears to be realized.
- And I've said before, as we come to this very important moment in the life of our parish, we have to decide how we're going to respond. Of course, my goal is that each of us responds in a manner that makes us holier people.
- The lives of the saints are filled with moments of loss and sadness. Yet, saints are people whose embrace of their losses and sadnesses catapulted them toward sanctity. This is what I wish for all of us.
- Thus, today I'd like to offer some practical thoughts about how we are to move forward with this change in the liturgical life of St. Ann's.
- While I know many of you plan to begin attending Mass at the new Latin Mass chapel in Mooresville, I know that others of you won't be able to make the drive each and every week.
- Thus, we will continue offering Mass every Sunday at 12:30pm, and our plan is to continue utilizing music very much like we've grown accustomed to with the Latin Mass. So, this Mass will become a Novus Ordo Mass with lots of Latin chant.
- My hope is to continue providing that contemplative atmosphere that so many of us find so alluring in the Latin Mass.

- For those of you who will make your liturgical home in the Mooresville chapel, please remember that St. Ann's is still your parish home, and that the Latin Mass chapel will act as a sort of extension to our parish.
- In practical terms this means that outside of Sunday Mass at the chapel, your sacraments, faith formation, and pastoral care will remain at St. Ann's.
- If you have a child to be baptized, it will take place here. If your children are preparing for Confirmation, that preparation will take place here. If you need the advice or counsel from the clergy, our parish clergy and I will be here for you.
- As there will be no collection taken at the Mooresville chapel and no ministries exercised there, you are asked to continue giving of your time, talent, and treasure through St. Ann's.
- Keeping the chapel in Mooresville open will likely cost our parish a significant amount of money over time, and so your continued generosity to St. Ann's is necessary.
- Likewise, I do hope that those of you who attend Latin Mass regularly in Mooresville will occasionally come to Sunday Mass here at St. Ann's. The deacons and I are going to miss seeing you here every Sunday!
- I admit this arrangement is a bit odd, but it's where we find ourselves at this time. Providence has allowed for this situation, and as we have no further recourse against it, we must learn to live with this arrangement.
- The first step to living with this arrangement *well* is to cultivate gratitude. Specifically, 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.
- The Latin Mass has been a source of beauty, edification, solace, and spiritual renewal for us. Yet, a large number of us remember life before *Summorum Pontificam*. Freedom with the Latin Mass been a gift, and we must thank God for what we've enjoyed these 17 years.
- The second step we must take is to be joyfully obedient. 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.
- On the contrary, we must see in this suffering an opportunity to grow in greater virtue and holiness. Our blessed Lord permits us difficulties and hardships for this very reason.
- Moments of hardship define our character. We shape ourselves by how we respond to difficult situations. While we may have experienced just anger these past 4 months, the time for being angry is now over. It's time to move forward.
- We move forward not by focusing on what's being taken away, but by focusing on what's being given: an opportunity to suffer a deprivation for Christ, an opportunity to live in hope, an opportunity to trust that Christ will do something good with all the prayers we've offered.
- Lastly, be patient and optimistic. Remember: the Latin Mass is not being taken away completely; it's being limited.
- For over 4 years, we've been praying a *Memorare* after every low Mass to preserve the Latin Mass, and it is being preserved. Our Lady has not turned her back on us.
- This is not a time to wring our hands in worry and anxiety, nor a time for bitterness. It's a time for courage, a time for surrender to God's almighty plans, a time to trust that God is doing something marvelous for our souls.
- Remember: Christ Himself shows us that meekness and humility win the day.
- Just as a reminder, our very last Latin Mass will be at 6pm on Wednesday, October 1st. We will have a solemn high Mass that night, and I very much hope you will attend.