

MASS INTENTIONS FOR 2024 ARE NOW BEING TAKEN **IMPORTANT! THERE WILL BE NO IN-PERSON BOOKINGS OF 2024 MASSES!**

As done previously, Mass intention requests for 2024 will only be accepted by mail, drop off in the mail slot by the Rectory door, or in the collection basket at Mass (please make sure to mark the outside of the envelope "2024 Mass Intentions"). Requests will be entered into the 2024 Mass Book in the order they are received by mail or drop off. No one may personally come to the Rectory for 2024 Mass Intentions.

Once your Mass intention has been processed you will be contacted by phone or email.

IMPORTANT CHANGES TO SUNDAY MASS SCHEDULE

Dear Parishioners,

Last week, I announced in the Bulletin the necessity to take a proactive measure with the Sunday Mass schedule in reducing one of the Sunday Masses (if you missed last week's letter, it can be found online on the parish website). Currently, the parish has five Masses on a Sunday. Having five Masses every Sunday means that one of the two priests must celebrate three Masses. Is this difficult? No. Priests love to say Mass. Is this optimal? No. Canon Law specifically states a priest may celebrate three Masses on any given day for specific circumstances. This schedule does not meet the criteria for those canonical circumstances. Now, what if one of those two priests were to become ill or be unable to celebrate Mass? In that situation, it is permissible for the priest to celebrate all five Masses. But, to regularly celebrate three Masses on a Sunday is not what the Church intends. If a parish had a need to celebrate six or seven Masses on a Sunday, that would behoove the Diocese to assign an additional priest to that parish. But the fact of the matter is, there are fewer and fewer priests available!

Now, nobody likes change, myself included, but I do believe the time is now to change the Sunday Mass schedule in preparation for a parish to do more with less. Much thought, prayer, reflection, and consultation has been put into this decision. Most parishes in my predicament would simply pare down the current schedule to an 8:00, 10:00, 12 noon schedule, leaving both Saturday and Sunday 5:00 Masses as is. But Saint Helen parish is not like other parishes! After monitoring the numbers of people attending Mass throughout the year, I have decided that beginning in January 2024 the parish Sunday schedule will **not** include a 12:30PM Sunday Mass. All other Masses will remain the same. My reasons are multiple, and I do not have enough space to list them all. Here are but a few:

1. The 12:30 Mass has been monitored and tallied as the lowest attended Sunday Mass.
2. Eliminating the 12:30 Mass will affect the least amount of parishioners, compared to creating an 8AM, 10AM, 12 noon schedule.
3. The children's choir sings at the 9:30 Mass and the Adult Choir sings at the 11:00 Mass.
4. On Holidays such as Easter & Palm Sunday, or if Christmas falls on a Sunday, the parish will add a 12:30 Mass to accommodate the crowds. A 12:30 Mass may be added when we engage all the parents in the "proximate preparation for Sacraments" which is done on a Sunday (about 4 times a year) and also brings large crowds. An 8AM, 10AM, 12 noon schedule would preclude this from happening.
5. If parishioners prefer a later Mass, there will still be a 5:00 Mass Sunday evening.
6. The Diocesan Bishop has expressed that if a parish has an evening Mass on Sunday to try to maintain it, especially if it's the only one around. Saint Helen parish is one of last parishes in the area to have a later Sunday Mass.

I do not take this decision lightly and have been considering it for over a year. I have discussed it with numerous pastors, staff members, and priest friends. I understand that this will inconvenience some, but I do believe being proactive to the impending clergy personnel situation is something that must be done sooner than later.

This new schedule will go into effect the first Sunday in January 2024. The last 12:30 Mass on a Sunday will be Sunday, December 31st. I cannot apologize for a situation I did not create, but must be a responsible steward and Pastor to this parish. The Mass book already reflects this decision and announcements will continue to be made informing parishioners of this new schedule until the new year. Letters to parents in the Academy and Religious Education will also be issued forthwith.

Sincerely,
Father Colamaria

REQUEST FOR MASS INTENTIONS FOR 2024

MASS TIMES YOU MAY REQUEST: LIMIT OF THREE (3) MASSES ONLY PER FAMILY!

Monday through Saturday: 9:00AM Mass	Offering per Mass: \$15.00. <u>One Intention Per 9:00AM Mass.</u>
Saturday 5:00PM Mass	Offering per Mass: \$10.00. There may be up to <u>ten (10)</u> separate intentions for this Mass, <u>for recently deceased ONLY.</u> Intentions for this Mass <u>will not open until a later date</u>, so please <u>do not request a Saturday 5PM Mass.</u>
Sunday Masses at 8:00AM & 9:30AM	Offering per Mass: \$25.00. <u>One intention per Mass.</u> (The Sunday 11:00AM Mass will now be "For The Parishioners" and, therefore, this Mass is not available for intentions.)
Sunday Mass at 5:00PM	Offering per Mass: \$10.00. This is a " multiple intention Mass " and there may be up to eight (8) separate intentions for this Mass.
Dates <u>NOT AVAILABLE</u> For 2024 Mass intentions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The last Friday of every month (Purgatorial Society Mass): Jan. 26, Feb. 23, March 29, April 26, May 31, June 28, July 26, Aug. 30, Sept. 27, Oct. 25, Nov. 29, & Dec. 27. • Mother's Day 9-Day Novena: May 11: 9AM, May12: 8AM, 9:30, and the 9AM Mass May 13-18. • Father's Day 9-Day Novena: June 15: 9AM, June 16: 8AM, 9:30, and the 9AM Mass June 17-22. • Christmas Eve & Christmas Day Masses.

Please make sure the form below is completed **before dropping off at the Rectory** to reserve Masses for loved ones and other intentions during the coming year of 2024. Offerings may be accepted by cash or check (made payable to St. Helen Church). **Please make sure you include your name, address, phone number and email address below so we may be able to contact you.** *Please print all information clearly so there is no mistake on the spelling of a loved one's name!*

1. Name for Intention:			
Requested by:			
1. Choice Date:	Day of Week:	Mass Time:	Offering: \$ _____
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2. Choice Date:	Day of Week:	Mass Time:	
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2. Name for Intention:			
Requested by:			
1. Choice Date:	Day of Week:	Mass Time:	Offering: \$ _____
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2. Choice Date:	Day of Week:	Mass Time:	
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3. Name for Intention:			
Requested by:			
1. Choice Date:	Day of Week:	Mass Time:	Offering: \$ _____
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2. Choice Date:	Day of Week:	Mass Time:	
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Total Enclosed: \$ _____

Submitted By: _____ Phone: _____
 Address: _____ Email: _____