

SACRED HEART CHURCH

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November, 2015

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

Mass “Ad Orientem”. This is a Latin term which refers to a Priest offering the Mass in the old traditional form which allows the Priest to face the same way as the congregation, ideally toward the East. The sun rises in the East and this is an ancient symbol of the Resurrection, Christ the light of the world rising from the dead.

Some feel that when the Priest faces the people during the Mass it gives the wrong impression that he is offering it to the people. In reality, the Priest offers the Mass with and for the people to God.

Vatican II allowed Priests to face the congregation but it was never mandatory. It was an option. In Europe many churches never changed the “form” of saying the Mass even when the new Mass was implemented in the vernacular.

For sometime now our liturgical committee has advised me of the enthusiasm of some to offer our 10:00 a.m. Sunday High Mass “Ad Orientem”, at the back high altar. Please note: This would not be the old Tridentine Mass which is offered at 8:00 a.m. on Sunday. It would be the new Mass, in English, with the same prayers and readings. The only difference would be that the Priest would face the East with the people as in the traditional form.

I have presented this idea to Bishop Serratelli and he thought that it was totally acceptable and even encouraged it. He advised that instruction and explanation, such as this letter should come in advance.

I would like to start this practice of offering the 10:00 a.m. High Mass “Ad Orientem” on the first Sunday of Advent, November 29.

Please note that this is not the old Mass. It is the new Mass, offered in the traditional form, as it still is in many parts of the world. Our Saturday 5:00 p.m. and Sunday 12:00 noon Masses will continue to be offered in the new form facing the congregation.

Our parish will be unique in that it offers several ways of legitimate catholic liturgy to praise God.

God Bless You,

Rev. Fr. John T. Connolly
Liturgical Committee