

Dear Parishioners of St. Gabriel and St. Raphael Parishes,

First, allow me to express my enthusiasm to return to city living. My first two assignments were in the city (St. John the Baptist and the Cathedral-Basilica) and I enjoy the vitality and life of living in a close community. I have been grateful for every one of my past assignments, but since I grew up in the city (Walnut Park) I've always enjoyed the pattern of living in a neighborhood.

This assignment is new for me, and for us all. Both parishes remain as "free-standing" parishes and I understand the importance of this distinction. Both parishes have a strong history of enthusiastic members and fierce loyalty to their parish, a sentiment I appreciate. That being recognized, that does not mean we cannot together look for efficiencies that benefit both parish communities with one pastor and one associate pastor, as we cultivate a stronger spiritual life among all.


I believe, as every Catholic is encouraged to embrace, that all parish life begins at the Altar of Our Savior at the celebration of the Eucharist. Sacrosanctum Concilium, a foundational document from Vatican II puts it this way:

The liturgy is the summit toward which the action of the Church tends, and, at the same time, the fountain from which all her energy flows. Apostolic work, in fact, is ordered so that all who have become (children) of God by means of faith and baptism may join in assembly, praise God in the Church, and take part in the sacrifice and at the table of the Lord. (SC 10).

In other words, whatever we are about as members of a parish family has to start and orient us towards the celebration of Christ's sacrifice at the altar. So, with this first letter, I call us all to re-commit ourselves to participating at Sunday Mass. COVID and our culture has hit Mass attendance hard. Many Catholics around the Archdiocese of St. Louis have not yet returned to Sunday Mass. If this includes you, please consider this as an invitation to return. Anything of value demands determination with renewed effort to foster greater engagement. With a full and active participation at Mass by all our members, we will be able to better celebrate our parish life and foster greater unity as members of Christ's Body. This will be represented in our prayer, our acts of charity and ministry, our interactions with parishioners and neighbors, and especially, as a community of faith united in Christ's Sacrifice.

I am still working out the details of moving and engaging the role as pastor, all of which becomes official on August 1, 2023. Until then, please pray for me and all the priests as I assure you of my prayers through the intercession of St. Raphael and St. Gabriel. And I look forward to meeting you at the Table of the Lord each Sunday.

Sincerely yours in Christ

  
Rev. Thomas M. Molini  
Pastor

### Mass Schedules for St. Gabriel and St. Raphael Parishes

With the implementation of our new pastoral structure, keeping a full schedule of Masses, Confessions, and other liturgical events has to be coordinated with the new availability of clergy. In the past, three full-time priests were assigned to our two parishes; now we have two. While grateful for all the help we can get from other priests, the schedule should be able to be covered by the two priests assigned to the parishes. Our new schedule beginning on August 1, 2023 will be as follows:

	St. Raphael Church	St. Gabriel Church
Monday-Friday	Confessions 7:30 am Mass 8:00 am	Confessions 8:15 am Masses 6:00 am and 8:45 am
Saturday	Morning Mass 7:00 am Confessions 3:30 pm Mass 4:30 pm (Antic. Sunday)	Confessions 4:00 pm Mass 5:00 pm (Antic. Sunday)
Sunday	Mass 9:00 am	Masses 6:30 am, 10:00 am, 5:30 pm

I know this will take some time to get used to and it is “temporary” until January 1, 2024 to see how this works for our communities. I appreciate the input from Frs. Shamleffer, Mayo, Madden, and Simon in considering this schedule.

*Fr. Molini*

### From Fr. John

Please find in this bulletin insert a message of welcome from Fr. Molini as well as the interim Mass schedule, which will be effective August 1. I would like to thank Fr. Molini for his help in providing both of these to our parish community.

With the announcement of the new Mass schedule beginning on August 1, we are beginning to schedule Mass intentions now through the end of the calendar year. In looking at the calendar in preparation for this announcement, the parish staff and I quickly realized that moving to this new interim Mass schedule will impact the scheduling of Mass intentions. In total, we will move from fourteen Masses a week to nine Masses. In particular for the Mass intentions for Sunday Masses, we will move from two Masses that can have an intention to one Mass a weekend. This is because one Mass offered for the Sunday obligation must be celebrated for the people, per the norms of Canon Law.

To provide a fair opportunity for parishioners to request Masses for themselves or for their loved ones, we will limit the number of Masses that can be requested between August 1 and December 31. A parishioner may request no more than 3 Masses between August 1 and December 31. These three Masses can be either 1 Sunday Mass and 2 weekday Masses or 3 weekday Masses.

Our parish staff has already been at work on the Mass calendar for intentions scheduled prior to the scheduling moratorium. If you have requested Masses and would like to know if they have been changed, please contact the parish office. I ask for your patience and understanding should a requested date not be available due to the change in the Mass schedule.

This week, we will reach out to Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, and Servers to determine their preferences for Masses after August 1.

Please continue to pray for our new priests as they move into final preparations for their transition to being here and at St. Gabriel.