

EMERGENCY WEEKEND MASS SCHEDULE

IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PASTOR AND WHEN NO PRIEST SUBSTITUTE CAN BE OBTAINED
ST. CECILIA & ST. THOMAS AQUINAS CHURCHES
AMES, IOWA

With the reduction to the ministry of one priest at St. Thomas Aquinas and the continued ministry of one priest at St. Cecilia, and the increasing difficulty to procure retired priests to cover the respective parishes, the pastors of St. Cecilia and St. Thomas Aquinas have decided on the following schedule for weekend Masses.

This emergency schedule provides for Masses at St. Cecilia and at St. Thomas Aquinas allowing either priest to cover both parishes in an emergency:

Saturday Vigil Mass: 5pm at St. Cecilia

Sunday Masses:

8:30am at St. Cecilia

(St. Peter and Paul, Gilbert, 8:15am Mass at which you are welcome.)

10:30am at St. Thomas Aquinas

(St. Patrick, Nevada 10:45am Mass at which you are welcome.)

5pm Spanish Mass at St. Cecilia

(All are welcome.)

7pm at St. Thomas Aquinas

(When University classes are in session at which you are welcome.)

RATIONALE

Decreasing availability of retired priests to cover the parishes.

We continue to be grateful to the service provided by our retired priests. However, Father John Herzog will turn 87 years old in November and has indicated he is not physically able to take a full weekend schedule at either parish. He will continue to cover the Spanish Mass at St. Cecilia.

Father Thomas Braak from Marshalltown turned 85 years old this August (2018). Especially during the winter months Father is concerned with traveling from Marshalltown to Ames.

Father Bernie Grady from Marshalltown will be 76 years old in December. He helps with the large Hispanic ministry in Marshalltown and, in an emergency, is called upon (if available) to cover the Spanish Mass at St. Cecilia should Fr. Herzog not be available.

After Marshalltown, the closest areas to Ames where retired priests reside are Mason City, Waterloo/Cedar Falls and Cedar Rapids, all 90-100 miles away. All three areas have retired priests who are in their mid-to-late 80s and do not wish to travel outside a rather closely defined area to their residences. Dubuque is 200 miles from Ames. Again, the age of the bulk of the retired priests is similar to other areas and a 400 mile round-trip is more than most want to take on, especially during the winter months. In addition to payment for sacramental service the priest substitute is paid the going IRS mileage reimbursement, which in the case of a round trip from Dubuque is over \$200.00, potentially costing the parish around \$500.00 per weekend.

QUESTIONS

What about obtaining retired priests from Des Moines? Remember, Des Moines is another diocese. The retired priests who reside in the city of Des Moines are committed to help either in the city of Des Moines, and after that, or other parishes in their diocese. The same is the case with our other diocesan neighbor, Sioux City. (Boone County: Boone or Madrid are in the Sioux City diocese and with two parishes to cover the priest's schedule is full. In both instances, the priest's first commitment is to his home diocese, then if available, outside the diocese.

How will we be notified when this schedule is in effect?

Planned absences: usual parish notification processes (Bulletin, electronic notification, verbal announcements) will be given. **Emergency:** signs will be posted at the entrances of both churches and electronic communication (if someone is available to post it) will be utilized.

What about my financial contribution? Will it go to the parish where I attend Mass?

The "loose collection", i.e. any cash received will stay with the parish in which it is received. Financial contributions received in parish-issued envelopes will go to either St. Cecilia or St. Thomas. We encourage you to consider automatic electronic contribution to your respective parish. Please call your respective parish to find out more information.

Are the buildings large enough to accommodate us? Given the weekend Mass counts over the last several years at both parishes, the worship space should be adequate. It may mean that portable seating may be required periodically, but this is no different than what we experience at Christmas, Ash Wednesday or Easter. As on those days, the opportunity to exercise welcome and hospitality is incumbent on us all. We are one body of Christ worshiping usually in two places. Occasionally, just like at holidays in our home, we need to make room for extra family and guests at our table. **Remember, this is for one or possibly two weekends at a time. This is not a permanent arrangement.**

Thank you! Thank you for your understanding and cooperation. Change is always challenging. We believe that we have a change while demanding some adjustment to well established personal or family custom is as minimally disruptive as possible. We are not asking anything of you that we, your priests, are not willing to do.

Sincerely,

Father Jim Secora
Pastor, St. Cecilia

Father Kyle Digmann
Pastor, St. Thomas Aquinas