**Changes to Weekend Masses**

**Q: What has led us to this decision ?**

**Every Parish in the Diocese** records their weekend attendance.

**The Diocesan guideline states if any Masses are at 50% of capacity or less, a reduction in Masses is warranted.**

The following is a summary of our (**St. John the Evangelist**) attendance trend:

Mass Attendance: in 2008, our attendance was 984 per weekend

 in 2018, our attendance is 771 per weekend

**St. Mary Defiance is experiencing the same issues.**

On some weekends**,** we have an insufficient number of ministers to support four

Masses (Eucharistic Ministers, Lector, Servers, Ushers). **With fewer people attending, we have fewer people available to serve in ministries.**

**Q: Why is this happening?**

**Fewer people are attending Mass.**

The **reasons are many,** and include factors such as:

**1.** We live in an area of little growth. Fewer new people are living/moving in/to

 the Defiance area.

**2.** Families are having fewer children.

**3.** More people are “unchurched” and/or do not claim a church affiliation.

**Q: What will this look like / how will it play out?**

Beginning in February 2019, there will be **one** Saturday evening Mass, and **two** Sunday Masses.

The **Saturday night** Mass **will remain at 5:00 p.m.**

**Sunday** Mass times will be at **8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.**

These decisions were not taken lightly. Many months of prayer, study and collaboration with St. Mary Parish led to these decisions. In February, St. Mary’s will also be changing to 1 Saturday night Mass and 2 on Sunday

**Q: How do we benefit from these changes?**

**An enhanced St. John Parish Family Experience on Sundays, along with:**

**1**. A more vibrant celebration of the Mass and more time for building

 Community.

**2.** A much better parking lot experience (less rushed and hectic)

**3.** Extended time between Masses allows for opportunities such as:

 coffee and donuts/fellowship

 catechetical/bible study/classes/meetings/Alpha

**4.**“Breathing Room” between Masses, to “hang out” with one another.

 The good people of St. John’s enjoy visiting with one another before and

 after mass. What a great blessing!

**Q: Are we in trouble or in danger of closing or merging?**

No. There is no indication at this time that the parish would be merged or consolidated with another parish.

**Our mission, as disciples, is to “live and love like Jesus”**

This is a **great time to remind all of us** of our Baptismal calling, and the charge and challenge given to us…“To go into the world and proclaim the Gospel…..”

**Each of us** has a role to play in making St. John’s an even more welcoming and inviting parish, where people gather to share in the Good News of Jesus Christ, to celebrate, and to go out and make Him known by our words and deeds.