



DIOCESE OF JEFFERSON CITY

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

4 September 2020

Dear People of St. Francis Xavier Parish,

Thank you for your prayers and concern for your pastor, Fr. Michael Penn, who was suddenly hospitalized last week. It is my hope and prayer that the Lord Jesus, the Divine Physician, will restore him to health and enable him to return to his pastoral duties as soon as possible.

In the meantime, it is my responsibility as your bishop to provide for the pastoral care of your parish. Monsignor Robert Kurwicki, my Vicar General, has graciously accepted my request for him to serve as the temporary priest-in-charge of the parish. This means he will be the one responsible for securing priests for weekend Masses and confessions, weddings and funerals, and he will supervise the overall administration of the parish and school. The local pastors at Immaculate Conception, Wardsville, and Westphalia parishes will be on call for emergencies for the Taos parishioners, including the anointing of the sick. Deacon Michael Berendzen will assist Monsignor Kurwicki with the day-to-day operations and administration of the parish. Considering that Monsignor Kurwicki will continue in his present responsibilities at the chancery and as pastor of his own parish, I would ask that you contact Deacon Berendzen first before making contact with Monsignor for any matter.

Furthermore, because of our current lack of priest substitutes and the elderly age of our retired priests in this time of pandemic, I have asked Monsignor Kurwicki to alter your weekend and daily Mass schedule until your pastor returns. Beginning next weekend, therefore, the weekend Mass schedule will be as follows: Confessions from 4:15 to 4:45 on Saturday with Mass at 5 pm, and Sunday Mass at 8 and 10 am. Weekday Mass opportunities will unfortunately be limited in this time, and I have granted Deacon Berendzen the necessary permissions to offer the liturgy of the word with Holy Communion during the week as needed. The times and dates of the weekday services will be announced in the parish bulletin.

Finally, please keep Fr. Penn as well as Fr. Coleman and Fr. Aubuchon in your prayers and ask for the intercession of Fr. Augustus Tolton for their healing.

With prayerful best wishes and kind regards, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Rev. W. Shawn McKnight, S.T.D.
Bishop of Jefferson City