



Diocese of Fall River
Office of the Bishop
Most Reverend Edgar M. da Cunha, S.D.V., D.D.

August 17, 2024

Dear Parishioners of St. George, St. John the Baptist and Our Lady of Grace Parishes,

Blessings and peace to all of you! Please know that I have heard your concerns and I understand this is difficult time for many of you, as changes are being implemented in these parishes.

We are also reaching out to thank you for your support during the parochial leadership transition, and to help clarify some of the questions we have recently received. Our diocese has many parishes and a limited number of priests to serve these parishes. In Westport, we are blessed that Fr. Dariusz accepted the assignment to minister as Pastor at all three parishes. His responsibilities include the celebration of most weekday and weekend Masses, most funerals, baptisms, and weddings, including all preparations, spiritual support for parishioners in need, as well as oversight of all operational and administrative functions of the parishes. While we are also blessed to have Fr. Bernier and Fr. McCullough as retired priests in residence, it is important to understand that these generous priests have provided great service to our Church but are retired and should not be expected to carry a full load of pastoral commitments or any administrative duties.


In April, Fr. Peter formed a strategic action group comprised of four lay leaders from each of the three parishes to help analyze and make recommendations for the future of our parishes. The group also is helping to guide the transition from Fr. Peter to Fr. Dariusz. Laura Carrillo and Deacon Joe Harrington from the Diocesan Office of Strategic and Pastoral Planning were also part of those meetings. This council meets monthly and sometimes invites guest speakers from other parishes to understand what we can learn from them as we look for better ways to work together. The members of this group have advised Fr. Dariusz on decisions and adjustments made in the parishes, including:

- Bringing our young people together in one faith formation program, something that has been in discussion for many years and has borne fruits at other parishes;
- Adjusting the Mass schedule so that it is more realistic for our Mass attendance and one priest with minimal help;
- Combining bulletins and websites to ensure that all parishes know about the happenings across town (www.cwestport.org);
- Addressing some of the financial inefficiencies that have caused deficits at our parishes.

While we have encountered some bumps along the way, please know that careful thought, consideration, and collaboration with members across Westport have gone into recent changes. Given the recent resignation of Joe and Joy Viveiros, we want to recognize their faithful service to St George parish and to the Westport community.

Thank you for your continued patience and prayers for our parish faithful and our priests as we navigate this journey. The intent is to continue to take steps so that our three parishes are on more equal footing and that the next generation in Westport can find joy in our faith.

Sincerely yours in Christ,


Most Reverend Edgar M. da Cunha, S.D.V., D.D.
Bishop of Fall River


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