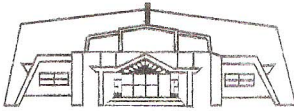


# ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH



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## A LETTER TO THE PARISHIONERS

Dear Faithful of St. Mary's Church,

Greetings of peace and love!

Changes come in every facet of life and the Church is no exception to this truth. Many would cling on to the old system and reject outrightly any new idea or undertaking. But everyone knows that we need changes for upliftment, improvement and eventually to get better results. Most of all, changes come to remind us of one basic truth: **as long as we live we do not stop to strive for beauty, truth and perfection until we come face to face with our Creator.**

The first week of Advent this year marks a special day in the life of the Church as she ushers the new translation of the English Mass. The Bishop will talk more about this in his latest pastoral letter.

Together and coinciding with the use of the new translation of the English Mass comes certain changes that we will find in St. Mary's Catholic Church, Dubai. The following will be expected at the start of the Advent Season 2011:

1. A **commentator** will lead the responses in every Mass.  
Aside from the projection screen and the leaflets of the Order of the Mass, help will come from a commentator to lead the congregation to respond in all masses. The commentator will lead us the way when we start using the new translation of the English Mass this coming Advent season.
2. **The Presider's Chair**  
Because the tabernacle at the center under the big crucifix on the wall will no longer be there, the presider's/main celebrant's chair takes its place. At the present, the presider's seat is at the corner in front of the baby's room. The general instruction of the Roman Missal #271 describes the presider's chair as follows:  
"The priest celebrant's chair ought to stand as a symbol of his office of presiding over the assembly and of directing prayer. Thus the best place for the chair is at the back of the sanctuary and turned toward the congregation...."
3. The **sanctuary** will be elevated by one step. Considering the size of the church and the crowd we get in all the services, the whole of the sanctuary will be elevated by approximately 15cm (1 step) to make it more visible. In doing so, those at the back will have the chance to follow better the liturgical celebration in the sanctuary instead of relying solely on the projection screen.

4. The images of the Virgin Mary and saints will move somewhere at the back of the main Church.

The general instruction of the Roman Missal (#278) says:

“In keeping with the Church’s very ancient tradition, it is lawful to set up in places of worship images of Christ, Mary and the saints for veneration by the faithful. But there is a need both to limit their number and to situate them in such a way that they do not distract the people’s attention from the celebration. There is to be only one image of any one saint. In general, the devotion of the entire community is to be the criterion regarding images in the adornment and arrangement of the church.”

5. Baptismal Font is to be situated in the main church. The number of baptism has increased tremendously this past couple of years. The regular baptism in the chapel side could no longer contain the crowd when 25 or more babies are baptized. It is therefore practical and useful to keep a baptismal font in the corner where presently the images of saints are.

6. Only one tabernacle inside the Church.

The word tabernacle, with all its rich history, since long ago comes to designate the locked container or safe in which the Eucharist is reserved. There is to be only one in each church complex, preferably located in a separate chapel. We shall therefore keep the tabernacle in the chapel side of St. Mary’s Church.

In 1967, an official instruction (Eucharisticum Mysterium, #53-55) has this to say:

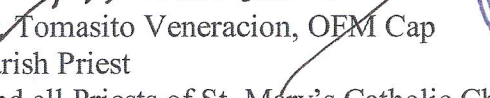
“It is recommended that as far as possible the tabernacle be placed in a chapel set apart from the main body of the church especially in churches where there frequently are marriages and funerals... On the grounds of the sign value, it is more in keeping with the nature of celebration that, through reservation of the sacrament, in the tabernacle, Christ not be present eucharistically from the beginning on the altar where Mass is celebrated. The presence is the effect of the consecration and should appear as such.”

We in St. Mary’s Catholic Church- Dubai cling to this affirmation: THE LITURGY IS THE ACT OF CHRIST. Our best and most memorable liturgies may or may not be marked by brilliant preaching and artfully designed furnishings. But they are invariably marked by the profound interaction of holy people and holy symbols with Christ as the head and master. We are confident that the changes enumerated above will inspire us to perform revered actions together as one family, one community.

Once again, our unfathomed gratitude goes to all of you who are so faithful, so simple, so pure, so gentle in your faith and devotion.

May God in his infinite and sublime wisdom guide you and bless you and your loved ones.

We remain,

  
Fr. Tomasito Veneracion, OFM Cap  
Parish Priest  
And all Priests of St. Mary’s Catholic Church  
27 October 2011

