

Live + Jesus

# Our Mother of Consolation Parish

9 E. Chestnut Hill Ave ♦ Philadelphia, PA 19118  
215.247.0430 ♦ [www.omcparish.com](http://www.omcparish.com)

Established 1855



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*“Growing in mission.... to be the presence of Christ in our world”*

November 9, 2018

Dear Friends,

On Thursday, November 8, at the annual meeting of the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) & Parish Finance Council (PFC), one of our topics for discussion was the **Sunday 6 PM Mass**. After considering the input received from parishioners, reviewing Mass attendance data 2008 thru 2018 (see below), and a lengthy discussion on our parish resources, the availability of priests, & the present situation in the Church, **both Councils unanimously supported the discontinuation of the Sunday 6 PM Mass** beginning on the First Sunday of Advent, December 2, 2018.

This decision was not arrived at easily and was made with the **utmost consideration of, and appreciation for, all who attend or minister at the 6 PM Mass**, especially Jen and Sal. The PPC & PFC echoed the desire to have Jen & Sal minister at another weekend Mass, as was mentioned in several parishioner responses. Although Jen & Sal told me that their schedules did not allow this, I gave them an open invitation to minister at Mass (regularly or occasionally), should things change.

In recognition & appreciation of Jen & Sal’s ministry for almost 20 years, we will have an opportunity to gather for the **last 6 pm Mass on Sunday, November 25 – The Feast of Christ the King**.

I thank our parishioners and parish leadership who participated in this conversation; I truly appreciate everyone’s understanding of, and sensitivity to, the present situation. I pray that through our celebration of the Word and Eucharist, **we may continue in our efforts to create a vital, welcoming, Catholic faith community**.

In de Sales,  
Fr. Bob

**Administered by the Oblates of Saint Francis de Sales and the Sisters of Saint Joseph**  
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# 2012 Report to Pastor Our Mother of Consolation

FS: 1545 DP: 7405

Episcopal Region: II, Deanery: Eastern Montgomery County and North West Philadelphia (7), Pastoral Planning Area: 420

## 1 - Demographic Profile

						<u>2008 - 2012</u>	
	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Registered Population	2,909	3,028	3,051	3,166	3,262	353	12%
Registered Households	1,090	1,123	1,109	1,140	1,163	73	7%
Priests Assigned (A)	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	0.0	0%
Reg. Population/Priest	1454/1	1514/1	1526/1	1583/1	1631/1		
Reg. Households/Priest	545/1	562/1	554/1	570/1	582/1		

## 2 - Selected Sacraments, Services, and Worship

						<u>2008 - 2012</u>	
	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Infant Baptisms	47	49	51	50	56	9	19%
Children Baptisms (ages 1-6)	2	5	2	7	2	0	0%
Children Baptisms (ages 7-17)	0	1	3	0	0	0	0%
Marriages(B)	14	16	13	11	11	-3	-21%
Funerals	29	46	37	49	38	9	31%
Baptism/Funeral Ratio (D)	1.79	1.20	1.59	1.22	1.53		

Sunday Masses	5	5	5	5	5	0	0%
Avg Wknd. Attendance	1,053	1,031	995	905	852	-201	-19%
% Attending	36%	34%	33%	29%	26%		

## 3 - Parish Religious Education Programs

						<u>2008 - 2012</u>	
	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Preschool	30	45	40	25	50	20	67%
Elementary (K-6)	97	107	90	95	91	-6	-6%
Junior High (7-8)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Senior High (9-12)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Adult: Catechumen (C)	3	0	3	3	0	-3	-100%
Adult: Candidates (C)	0	1	0	0	1	1	0%

## 4 - Parish School Enrollment

School Code	Total Enrollment: (Pre K to 8)						<u>2008 - 2012</u>	
		<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
N101		187	177	176	179	185	-2	-1%

(A) Includes priests "assigned to the pastoral ministry of the parish" as reported from the Office for Clergy, June 2013. Does not include externs.

(B) Marriages include all those witnessed by a priest and convalidation by renewal of consent.

(C) Includes only baptisms for catechumens and only confirmations for candidates.

(D) Includes baptisms of infants, children ages 1-6, children ages 7-17 and Catechumens.

# 2017 Report to Pastor

## Our Mother of Consolation, Philadelphia

FS: 1545 DP: 7405

Episcopal Region: II, Deanery: Eastern Montgomery County and North West Philadelphia (7), Pastoral Planning Area: 420

### 1 - Demographic Profile

						<u>2013 - 2017</u>	
	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Registered Population	3,257	3,252	3,437	3,431	3,499	242	7%
Registered Households	1,145	1,130	1,186	1,174	1,190	45	4%
Priests Assigned (A)	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0%
Reg. Population/Priest	3257/1	3252/1	3437/1	3431/1	3499/1		
Reg. Households/Priest	1145/1	1130/1	1186/1	1174/1	1190/1		

### 2 - Selected Sacraments, Services, and Worship

Infant Baptisms	42	43	33	23	29	-13	-31%
Children Baptisms (ages 1-6)	11	3	8	10	7	-4	-36%
Children Baptisms (ages 7-17)	0	2	1	0	1	1	0%
Marriages(B)	13	12	12	9	7	-6	-46%
Funerals	37	30	29	26	33	-4	-11%
Baptism/Funeral Ratio (D)	1.43	1.77	1.45	1.27	1.12		

Sunday Masses	5	5	5	5	5	0	0%
Avg Wknd. Attendance	897	872	932	878	854	-43	-5%
% Attending	28%	27%	27%	26%	24%		

### 3 - Parish Religious Education Programs

Preschool	62	90	40	50	50	-12	-19%
Elementary (K-6)	78	74	70	75	78	0	0%
Junior High (7-8)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Senior High (9-12)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Adult: Catechumen (C)	0	5	0	0	0	0	0%
Adult: Candidates (C)	3	0	0	3	2	-1	-33%

### 4 - Parish School Enrollment

#### *Our Mother of Consolation*

School Code N101

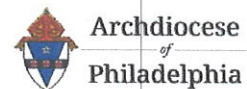
Total Enrollment (Pre K to 8)	198	201	222	231	231	33	17%
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(A) Includes priests "assigned to the pastoral ministry of the parish" as reported from the Office for Clergy, August 2018. Does not include externs.

(B) Marriages include all those witnessed by a priest and convalidation by renewal of consent.

(C) Includes only baptisms for catechumens and only confirmations for candidates.

(D) Includes baptisms of infants, children ages 1-6, children ages 7-17 and Catechumens.



## OMC October Count 2015-18

<b>October – Week 1</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
Saturday – 4:40 PM	183	156	170	144
Sunday – 7:30 AM	82	60	80	74
Sunday – 9:00 AM	360	317	296	278
Sunday – 11:00 AM	188	202	200	150
Sunday – 6:00 PM	125	114	141	95
<b>October- Week 2</b>				
Saturday – 4:30 PM	115	148	168	151
Sunday – 7:30 AM	73	81	72	82
Sunday – 9:00 AM	348	298	267	203
Sunday – 11:00 AM	219	197	178	196
Sunday – 6:00 PM	168	162	134	82
<b>October – Week 3</b>				
Saturday – 4:40 PM	114	159	125	156
Sunday – 7:30 PM	85	84	75	74
Sunday – 9:00 AM	394	349	202	284
Sunday – 11:00 AM	198	184	288	242
Sunday – 6:00 PM	141	118	95	96
<b>October – Week 4</b>				
Saturday – 4:30 PM	158	93	158	220
Sunday – 7:30 AM	66	86	101	86
Sunday – 9:00 AM	298	382	326	201
Sunday – 11:00 AM	238	212	215	150
Sunday – 6:00 PM	134	117	139	118
<b>October – Week 5</b>				
Saturday – 4:30 PM	104	156	158	
Sunday – 7:30 AM	81	88	87	
Sunday – 9:00 AM	438	289	287	
Sunday – 11:00 AM	207	215	194	
Sunday – 6:00 PM	143	124	112	
<b>Totals</b>				
Week 1	938	849	887	741
Week 2	923	886	819	714
Week 3	932	894	785	852
Week 4	894	890	939	775
Week 5	973	827	838	
<b>Total Attendance</b>	<b>4660</b>	<b>4346</b>	<b>4268</b>	<b>3082</b>
<b>4 Week Totals</b>	<b>3687</b>	<b>3519</b>	<b>3430</b>	<b>3082</b>

Dear Father Bob,

After receiving your notice regarding the Mass coverage on Sunday night, we are both in agreement it should be discontinued at this time. Thank you for all that you do.

P.S. I attended the All Saints Mass for the first time. I was overwhelmed with the fantastic job the children did honoring their special Saint.

Congrats to all the teachers who must have spent many hours preparing the kids. Quite a few who spoke at the microphone could be readers at the other Masses - get them started early.

God Bless you as you keep our wonderful parish going. Our choir is fantastic too!!!

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Hi Fr. Bob, Thanks very much for reaching out to the parishioners before making this difficult decision. I understand that 5 Masses every weekend may be too many for our parish especially when you are understaffed, but I would hate to see the 6pm Sunday Mass come to an end. This option was particularly helpful to our family when our children were in high school and very busy with sports and other activities. More importantly, I feel that Jen and Sal have done a remarkable job over many years to make the liturgy more inspiring and relatable for our younger parishioners. They have become part of the OMC family and I would be very sad to see them leave our community. If it is decided that the 6pm Mass must be discontinued, perhaps Jen and Sal could participate in another Mass? Thanks again for soliciting our input.

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Good afternoon, Fr. Bob:

I very rarely attend the 6 PM mass, but I've noticed the decline in attendance at the 4:30 and 11 o'clock masses. Also, when I've needed to go to mass on Sunday afternoon, I've gone to St. Genevieve because a 5 PM mass is more convenient than 6 PM. I'm sure that, if there is a need to cancel the 6 PM mass because of the lack of priests available and the small attendance, OMC parishioners will be able to make other arrangements.

Thank for your leadership and hard work.

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Fr. Bob

I wanted to share my thoughts about discontinuing the Sunday 6 PM mass. The Sunday evening mass is what drew me to OMC parish. I started attending 15 years ago as a pregnant mother who was struggling with her faith. I found the evening mass to be so peaceful and beautiful. I left every Sunday night feeling as sense of calm and peace to begin my week. As I had my children and they grew, the Sunday night mass did not work into our schedule as much as I would have liked but I always thought once the boys grew up and went to high school we would start to attend the Sunday night mass. Obviously, I can not ask you to continue it based on what I hope my future holds but I felt I would be sad if the mass was discontinued and I did not share my thoughts.

Thank you for the opportunity to share,

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Fr. Bob,

I don't see an issue with the parish discontinuing the 6pm mass on Sundays, especially since the parish offers the 4:30pm on Saturday and an early 7:30am mass on Sunday. Thanks for asking!!!

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Personally, I have always loved the reflective tenor of the 6 PM – but I support 100% your careful stewardship of parish resources – that includes YOU!.

Maybe there could be a six pm from time to time.... Or not

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Dear Father Bob,

I have been a member of OMC for about thirteen years. I would like to give some input to the discussion on discontinuing the 6 pm Sunday Mass.

The 6 pm Mass is, by far, my favorite Mass at OMC even though I am not able to attend it every Sunday because of family commitments. As you know, the feel of that Mass is very different from the others on the schedule. The 7:30 Mass is primarily older adults. The 9:00 is for families, especially those with young children. The 11:00 is the high Mass and features the choir. I have attended each of these Masses at one point or another and the Saturday 4:30 pm Mass as well.

The 6 pm Mass is why I kept coming to OMC when I was looking for a church when I moved back into this part of the city years ago. I feel God at this service more than any of the others. It is (mostly) free from the distractions caused by young children. There is a wider variety of people who attend this Mass in terms of age, and there are more younger and middle age people who attend Mass alone (myself included). Sal and Jen use music that gives the Mass a contemplative, uplifting, and more modern feel. That music breathes the life into the Mass.

There have been only one or two times that I've gone to the 6 pm and had other musicians besides Sal and Jen. The Mass was not the same - at all. It had nothing to do with the talents of the other musicians. It's the music itself. The feel that Sal and Jen's music creates is something that calls to me. It's beautiful to hear church songs that are heartfelt prayers instead of only solemn hymns or songs I remember from Catholic school, and I leave Mass feeling grounded and peaceful just about every time.

When I can't attend the 6 pm Mass, I go to the 7:30 am or (in the summer only) the 9:00 am. While the 7:30 am Mass is calm and quiet, it doesn't have the energy of the 6 pm Mass (which is also calm and quiet). The 9:00 am Mass is difficult to tolerate during the year because I struggle to focus with the loud children in the church. The 11 am choir Mass feels too traditional for me. The 4:30 pm Mass on Saturday is a nice Mass but is difficult schedule-wise at times.

As to the point about parishioners managing without the 6 pm Mass during the summer months, I would consider that many people are away during that time which allows the seats at the other Masses to be filled by those of us who would normally attend the evening service. The 9 am Mass is a good example. It's a lovely Mass in the summer because the families with kids are on vacation, so it's not overly crowded. During the rest of the year, it's a very different situation.

I understand that the 6 pm Mass will likely be discontinued despite any input you receive from us as parishioners. Reality is reality. If there are no priests to say the Mass, that's that. The biggest loss will not be the time. The loss will be the experience that the service in it's current state creates for those of us who attend it. I have only found this type of experience at one other church, and that is at St. John the Evangelist in Center City. I will be sad to lose the experience so close to home.

On another note, I'm saying special prayers for you, Father Bob. I give you a lot of credit for holding it all together. I know this situation with Father Mark has been a nightmare too. I am praying that God continues to give you strength.

Take care, and have a good week.

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Hi Father Bob,

We have always enjoyed the 6pm Mass as a family and would like to see it continued as our children's schedules only get more hectic over the years. But, if it needs to be cancelled, we certainly understand. Thank you for all the work you continue to do and for allowing us the opportunity to let you know our thoughts!

Warmly,

Dear Fr Bob,

We continue to keep you and our OMC family in our daily prayers.

We understand how overwhelmed you are. We appreciate your request for our input. As you know we worship weekly at the 6. We always feel welcomed and loved. It's a very special group of people who attend Mass at that time. I remember being asked to be an EM over 20+ years ago and did not feel worthy. After my training the deacon who trained me said "you're as worthy as the next". I think of him every time I walk up to the altar. Discontinuing the 6 impacts us greatly. As I'm sure you can appreciate I have a very busy work and on call schedule. It would be difficult for me to continue in my ministry as an EM as I can't commit to another time for Mass. As you know we frequented St Gens in the summer. There are so many OMC parishioners who continue to attend Mass there. We're wondering if we changed our time to 5pm if our parishioners would return to OMC. We understand these are troubled times for our Church....as you said our numbers are down as well as contributions. However, we feel if you discontinue a Sunday evening Mass.....more people will leave OMC. Are there any Oblates who can help you by saying the 6 pm Mass? I know there's an Oblate residence in Wyndmoor. We truly appreciate everything you do Fr Bob. We love you and hope we can continue to see you at a Sunday evening Mass at OMC.

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Hi Father Bob. I wanted to take this time to express our desire to keep the Sunday night 6p mass. Our family enjoys attending that mass and would like to see it continue.

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Father Bob, the 6:00 Mass was very welcome when it was initiated and a boon to young people's attendance and shift workers. We availed ourselves of it off

If we travelled etc. I find now that 6 is a bit late for family activities etc. I although think that people attend because it is there not out of necessity any more. I Agree it is also a stretch for the priests. With St. Gens 5:00 Mass maybe we are superfluous time wise.

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Hi Father, I just saw your email about the 6 pm Mass. Due to limited resources and the availability of Sunday Masses close by, I totally understand and support the decision to end the 6 pm Sunday Mass. Hopefully, there will be a way to keep Sal and Jen involved in Music Ministry at OMC. Like many parishioners, we feel a special connection to the 6 PM Mass and will be sad to see it go. Thanks,

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Hey Fr. Bob --

Sounds like you're spread pretty thin, to say the least!

I rarely attend the Sunday 6 pm Mass. I usually attend our Saturday 4:30 Mass, and twice a month I serve as an EM at the Villa's Saturday Vigil.

I think dropping the 6 pm makes a lot of sense in view of current staff levels and responsibilities. I really appreciate your seeking feedback from us.

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Bob, How important to make good decisions like this. You are all in my prayers

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Dear Father Bob, every day brings decisions which affect others. For me, I seldom go to Sunday evening Mass and on the occasions when I have it was usually too late for me. St. Gen's as 6:00 is too late for me. I would be more affected by losing the Saturday evening Mass. Whatever decision you make will affect some negatively but our current world is going to make changes necessary for all in some way. It will all work out. Sorry you have an additional burden.

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Bob....I wouldn't blame you if you discontinued this Mass.

I myself have wondered if OMC could justify running a Mass that is no longer heavily attended, much less whether the parish had the priests to handle it.

A lot changed when St. Genevieve's began a 5 PM Mass; I believe OMC was getting a lot of people from our sister parish. Of course, attendance has been hurt, too, by the negative publicity from the scandal, and that has just added to the decline. It was amazing and refreshing at 4:30 Mass today that we had such a full church.

Do what you think is prudent; I and others will make it a priority to attend Mass whenever it is celebrated.

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Dear Bob,

I know that this is a very difficult decision and one for which I deeply admire you soliciting feedback from the parish. I also know that people can often not think beyond their own circumstances. Please know that I support you no matter how this plays out. Feel free to touch base if I can be of any assistance.

Peace!

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Father Bob,

One evening Mass per weekend combined with 3 Sunday morning Masses provides adequate choice for the busiest parishioners among us. Thank you for asking for our input.

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My vote is to discontinue the Mass on Sunday at 6:00 PM.

I perfectly understand the shortage of priests and the downturn in attendance at the 6:00 PM Mass.

My prayers are still going for Fr. Mark. We need him back.

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Thanks for the update. I have no problem with the 6 PM Sunday Mass being discontinued.

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It is probably time to discontinue the 6PM Sunday Mass.

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Father Bob, the 6:00 Mass was very welcome when it was initiated and a boon to young people's attendance and shift workers. We availed ourselves of it often if we travelled etc. I find now that 6 is a bit late for family activities etc. I although think that people attend because it is there not out of necessity any more. I agree it is also a stretch for the priests. With St. Gens 5:00 Mass maybe we are superfluous time wise.

---

Hi Father Bob,

Although disappointed about the 6:00 mass we understand your situation. We have enjoyed this mass for many years and had hoped it would continue for many more. The feeling of peace, tranquility and overall joy are what I will miss the most. Jen and Sal lend themselves so well to the uplifting experience at the 6:00 mass. I don't always like to wait until 6:00 on a Sunday night to go to mass but what a great way to end the weekend and begin a new week. Mark and I will miss this mass, Jen and Sal, and the pure good feelings we come away with after a beautiful 6:00 mass at OMC. Thank you,

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Hello Fr. Bob,

I understand this difficult decision and I appreciate you asking for input from the parishioners. The 6:00 Mass time does not impact on me a great deal as it is not a Mass that I attend often. That being said, I very much enjoy the music ministry at this Mass. I have found their music to be both thoughtful and soothing while listening to it. If it is discontinued would there be the opportunity to incorporate Jen and Sal in leading the music at one of the other Masses even if it was not every week? It would be very sad to lose their gift to our parish which I'm sure others enjoy as much as I do.

Thank you,

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Dear Father Bob

These are some reflections following your email about discontinuing the 6pm Mass.

For myself, I see the 6pm as my "go to Mass". On a normal weekend when I am in Philadelphia it allows me to balance out work and family commitments. Of course, I do go to other Masses. We are blessed in this parish to have that freedom. I like my Sunday Mass attendance to fit into a broader spiritual space and not to be rushed or just "fitted in".

However, my personal convenience is secondary. I would look at this from 2 points of view - what is the market (sorry business school dean speaking here!) and how does it fit with the mission?

What is the market for a 6pm Mass? When I stay in Baltimore over a weekend I usually go to 6pm mass at St. Ignatius. My observation is that younger couples and individuals (not with families) tend to go to this Mass. In fact, they usually have a monthly social after Mass that reinforces this. The parish is in Mt Vernon with a population of young professionals and graduate students from a variety of universities. This is similar to my experience in Liverpool. However, that was a Cathedral parish and the 7pm Mass also catered to committed Catholics who had for some reason missed the scheduled masses in their parish (and given the shortage of priests most parishes in the diocese are served by single priests often in a cluster format so that there is often only 1 mass available to parishioners there). So we should assess our market: is there a big enough market of young professionals in Chestnut Hill who prefer this time? What is the Mass availability for other parishes in NW Philadelphia area? Could we extend our mission by continuing to make this Mass available?



How does it fit with the mission? Will we become less of a "welcoming Catholic faith community ..." if we dropped this Mass? My own reflection is no because you and your fellow priests have a clear continuing commitment to preach the gospel cogently and creating a worshipful environment where together we are a Eucharistic community. If you and the parish council also believe this then I think you should feel free to make whatever decision you are moved towards.

I know this last few months have been particularly hard for you personally. I really appreciate your leadership. I am sorry that I can only come "home" weekends but know that I am available if you want someone else with which to test perspectives. Also know that you and the staff at OMC are in my prayers.

In our Lord,