

On Church and Chapel Use

POLICY:

It shall be our policy that both the chapel and the church shall be available for the devotional and liturgical life of the parishioners of our community subject to the limitations of the facilities and the resources of the parish.

BACKGROUND, DESCRIPTION AND REASON FOR POLICY:

The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council, recognizing the importance of devotions in the life of the Church, encouraged pastors and teachers to promote sound popular devotions, writing “Popular devotions of the Christian people are to be highly commended, provided they accord with the laws and norms of the Church.” *Sacrosanctum Concillium*, no 13. Indeed, Pope John Paul II devoted an entire apostolic letter promoting devotion to the rosary. Pope John Paul II, Apostolic letter *On the Most Holy Rosary* (Oct. 16, 2002)

Prior to this policy revision, devotional practices and liturgical practices had been separated between the chapel and the church, with some exceptions allowing for liturgical practices in the chapel in the case of parishioners who had been baptized and received their First Communion in the chapel, in the case of extra Masses needed during Christmas and Easter or extraordinary need of audio-visual capability for devotions to be allowed in the church.

As our parish continues to thrive and grow, and we dedicate ourselves to *bring Christ to the world*, we see no reason to exclude proper devotional practices recognized as integral to the development and growth of our faith, from the church. Additionally, as we strive to ensure that all *May find Christ here*, given the life and growth of the parish, we see no reason to exclude liturgical practices from the chapel, subject to certain facility and resource limitations and considerations.

In evaluating the use of the chapel for liturgical practices such as weddings or funerals, the following considerations must be taken into account; the size of the expected gathering, limited hospitality accommodations in the chapel, lack of separate areas for bridal parties to prepare in the chapel, very limited gathering space for pre-mass visitation for funerals where the deceased is being laid to rest in a casket, and music and sound systems that are less than state of the art. In the case of either devotional practices in the church, or liturgical practices in the chapel, additional considerations will be given as to the availability of priests and/or the size and scope of other activities or liturgical practices that may be scheduled to occur sequentially or concurrently.