

Fourth week of Easter  
May 5, 2020

Dear members of St. Patrick's Church in Hampton, Iowa,  
Greetings and peace of Christ be with you during this holy season of Easter!

As many of you are aware, a year ago, beginning in May of 2019, we began a combined bilingual English and Spanish Mass. This was done to try to more fully help us to live into the experience of Church as one community, to worship together crossing cultural and language divides.

After much prayer and reflection and conversation with members of both language communities, it seems that at this time, having a bilingual Mass is not the best for the parish in moving forward into the future. Therefore, I have decided that when we are able to gather together again for public Mass, we will again offer a separate Spanish Mass at 5:30pm on Sunday evenings, and the English Mass will continue to be a part of schedule rotation with the other three parishes.

Before this decision was made, we were planning to have on the calendar for this year a couple of Sunday evening events, namely the Fall Dinner, and the Knights of Columbus spaghetti supper. Further conversation will have to be had about these events, of how will we fit them on the schedule, or if will have an earlier Spanish Mass on that particular day.

I thank you all for your patience through the process of trying out the bilingual Mass. I do not regret doing it as I think it was necessary to try. But, as I said, it seems that in moving forward as a parish it would be best for now for both language communities to have their own separate language Masses.

That being said, I still greatly hope and pray that we continue to carry forward a spirit of community, as that was the driving force for me behind having the combined bilingual Mass. I hope and pray that we are creative in ways of still reaching out to members of the other language community, pushing ourselves outside of our comfort zone, to foster community between each other. I hope we continue to grow our committees to include members of both language/cultural communities. I hope we plan events together that allow for fellowship with each other.

Perhaps we may be creative in that maybe during the Spanish Mass, some members of the English community will cook a meal and serve it to our Spanish community after their Mass; and that during the English Mass, members of the Spanish community will cook a meal and serve it to our English Community.

May we continue to be intentional in our efforts of living into our identity of one Church Community, One Church Family, One Body of Christ, though we may be of many languages and cultures. As St. Paul reminds us in Galatians 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free...for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

As we move towards Pentecost may we pray in a special way for the power of the Holy Spirit to continue to unite us, thought a community of many languages and countries, that our witness may shine Christ's light to the world, that they may know we are Christians by our love!

Sincerely in the Peace of Christ,  
Your Pastor,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. Kevin Earleywine". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Fr. Kevin Earleywine