

## Who's New at St. Agnes?

While Father Joy is back home in India through much of January, two retired priests are presiding at Masses for him at St. Agnes. For the second and third week in January, Father Ralph Gross will be here.

### Meet Father Ralph.

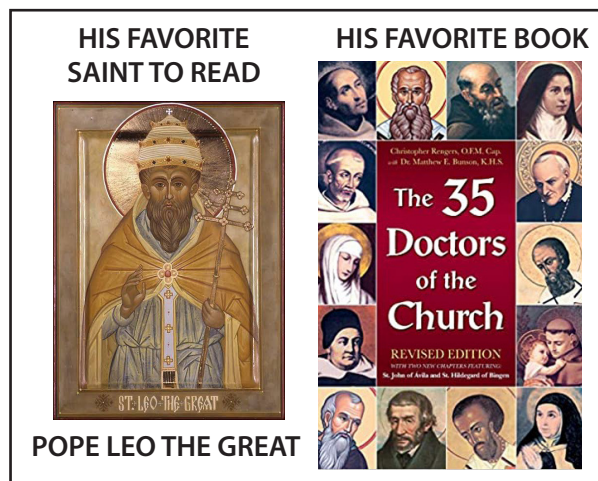
A senior priest of the Milwaukee Archdiocese, Father Ralph Gross is still busy helping out at parishes when needed. Whether hearing confessions, celebrating Mass or preparing a homily, Father enjoys staying active. He still plays golf regularly in good weather and hits the gym for basketball and pickleball. In fact, his recent hip replacement will keep him even better shape for these activities.

Father Ralph was baptized at St. Anthony's church and then moved to St. Mary's in Menomonee Falls. The family moved back to St. Anthony for seventh and eighth grade. Last week he filled in as the celebrant at Mass at St. Anthony's. Walking back to his car after Mass last week, Father pointed out the graves of some of his relatives just outside St. Anthony's Church. "My gravestone is further back near the golf course," he said. "My name is already engraved on the marker."

Father's path to the priesthood began with the influence of his parents. "My dad was the most awesome individual," he said. "A gentle Christian individual, he had such a wonderful attitude. He was quiet and my mother was the opposite." Each May the family prayed the rosary together. His dad would attend Mother of



**FATHER RALPH GROSS**



Perpetual Help devotions every Tuesday evening. On Sundays the family would attend Mass together, and then his dad would go back to a second Mass by himself. "He was a tremendous influence on my life," Father said.

After his ordination, Father Ralph first served at St. Joseph's in Fond du Lac. He also taught at St.

Mary's Springs High School there for seven years. His second assignment was here at St. Agnes while Father Joseph Cunningham was pastor. "I so enjoyed him," Father Ralph said. His time here was cut short when Archbishop Weakland sent Father Ralph to Catholic University in Washington, D.C., to study canon law so that he could afterwards return to the diocese and work in the chancery office.

After graduation, he spent more than a dozen years working for the Milwaukee Archdiocese, first as vice-chancellor, then as chancellor and then as the chair of the committee for the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the archdiocese. Preferring to return to pastoral work, Father Ralph then served at St. Margaret Mary in Milwaukee, St. Bruno in Dousman and St. Paul in Genesee Depot before retiring in 2016.

"I am happy to have the experience of serving in the substitute ministry now," he said. "It's great to have no administrative duties. I can focus on Mass, confessions and preaching — and I have time to prepare."

We are blessed to have you, Father Ralph. Thank you for coming to St. Agnes to help out while Father Joy is away!