



**FR. VICTOR HERNANDO**  
Pastor/Administrator

## **From the Pastor's Office**

One fateful day in August 2020, I received a phone call from Msgr. Dreilling, the Vicar General. He said, *“Father Victor Hernando, Bishop Joseph Brennan is appointing you as the Administrator of the Our Lady of the Sierra Parish, Oakhurst, California, effective September 1, 2020.”* Deep inside me, I asked, *“Why me? Why the mountains? Why, now?”* The only acceptable response was, *“Yes, I obey, but please pray for me.”*

YES, I am now your pastor. The Creek Fire welcomed me, seemingly conveying the message that beyond the beauty of the Sierras are challenges to face and overcome, a cross to carry, and a resurrection toward which to hope. I have nothing to fear because the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Patron Saint of the parish, is my Mother, Model, Protector, and Intercessor.

This is my first assignment as Pastor/Administrator in the United States. Prior to my appointment, I was Parochial Vicar for five and half years at the Good Shepherd Catholic Parish in Visalia. Previous to that, I was priest for 38 years in the Diocese of Laoag, Philippines.

As your new pastor, three thoughts come to mind:

- a. Tell me, show me, how good and how beautiful it is to live in Oakhurst and to be the Pastor of Our Lady of the Sierra Parish.
- b. You may have a favorable regard of yourself and a low assessment of the priest. The priest on the other hand may have a favorable regard of himself and a low assessment of his parishioners. One must go down and the other go up, so that we could meet at a point somewhere in the gap, and from there JOURNEY TOGETHER.
- c. You may have developed and enjoyed an image of Christ in Fr. Joel and may be ambivalent about the image of Jesus that you see in your new Pastor, but let us remember that it is the same Jesus who is presenting another angle of His face so as to have a richer encounter with Him. With the Holy Spirit continually guiding us, we can continue to build, strengthen and enrich our Christian community.

For me, CHURCH HAPPENS WHEN PEOPLE COME TOGETHER AND BECOME FRIENDS. I view my ministry with you as an ACCOMPANIMENT. My leadership role will not only be to lead you, but also to allow myself to be led by you. As St. John Capistrano declared, *“TOGETHER INITIATE, ORGANIZE, AND ACTIVATE!”*

Please include me in your prayers. Be my prayer warriors!