

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In this letter I hope to correct some misinformation that floats around the parish and the larger Concord community. There's really nothing new here - I'm just taking an opportunity to get the facts together in one place.

1) There are no plans to merge Holy Family Parish in Concord and St. Irene Parish in Carlisle. What is planned is for these two parishes to enter into a collaborative. Over a number of years, in phases, the parishes of the Archdiocese of Boston are being grouped in collaboratives of 2-3 parishes. In a collaborative, the member parishes maintain their own identity, worship and finances. What changes is that where there were once 2-3 parishes with 2-3 pastors and 2-3 parish staffs, there will now be 2-3 parishes with one pastor and one parish staff. There will be one Parish Council representing the 2-3 member parishes but each member parish will have its own Finance Council.

2) Holy Family and St. Irene Parishes will become a collaborative in June 2019. In early 2019 Cardinal Sean will appoint a pastor for the Concord-Carlisle Collaborative. Neither Fr. Donohoe at St. Irene nor I will be the pastor of the collaborative. Fr. Donohoe is well beyond the retirement age of 75 and at that time I will be 72. I will ask to be appointed a Senior Vicar in another parish in the Archdiocese. In such an assignment I will not be the pastor and I will not have administrative responsibilities but I will serve 3-4 days a week in ministry. I do not know at this time where I might be assigned as a Senior Vicar although I do know that it will not be in Concord. When I reach 75 (April 2021) I hope to continue serving in a parish as long as my good health allows - and I pray that will be for a long time!

3) Sometime in June 2018 I will be moving out of the rectory in Monument Square when work begins on renovating the rectory space into parish offices and meeting space. (I have not yet finalized where I will be living once I move out of the rectory but it will be in another rectory somewhere within easy driving distance of Concord.) Renovating the rectory is the second phase of a long-term process, the first phase of which was the renovation of the lower church into a multi-purpose space. A third phase will be the renovation of Monument Hall and building a connector between it and the new office space in the former rectory. The renovated rectory building will not include any living quarters. The pastor of the Concord-Carlisle Collaborative will live in the rectory at St. Irene Parish in Carlisle.

As you can see from the above, my last year in Concord will be a busy one. The renovation project is large and demanding. I'm grateful for the assistance and patience of the Parish Staff, the parish Pastoral and Finance Councils and the Parish Buildings and Grounds Committee. In the near future I will be asking for your assistance in completing the funding for the rectory project and I am counting on your ever-generous response to enhancing our parish and its ministries.

Some significant changes and challenges lie ahead in the life of our parish and in my life as a priest. After Holy Week 2018 I was keenly aware that I have one more Christmas and one more Easter here at Holy Family. When I take my leave in June 2019 I will have served the Catholic community in Concord for 25 years, a quarter century of God's grace and blessings in my life... But - we have much to do before next June and I ask for your patience, assistance, understanding and prayers!

I hope this letter has offered some clarification on these matters. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask!

Sincerely,
Fr. Fleming