

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This week I begin my last year as pastor of Holy Family Parish. If that comes as a surprise to you, then you've not had a chance to keep up with my letters in the bulletin. In June of 2019 our parish will become a collaborative with St. Irene Parish in Carlisle. Over a number of years this is happening to groups of 2 and 3 parishes across the archdiocese. In a collaborative like ours will be, the two parishes remain open and independent but where there used to be two pastors and two parish staffs there will then be one pastor and one parish staff to serve both parishes. One Parish Council will be elected to serve the two parishes but since finances are separate, each parish will have its own Finance Council. In June of 2019 I'll be 72 years old with retirement still three years away at 75. I hope to be appointed a Senior Vicar in another parish where I will not be the pastor but will assist the pastor there 3-4 days a week. If the process goes as it should then in early 2019 we'll know who the new pastor will be although his appointment will not be effective until June 2019. (I'm repeating this information because I continually meet folks who aren't up to date on what's ahead.)

In the year ahead we'll be renovating and repurposing the rectory in Monument Square which will then no longer be a residence for the pastor but will house our parish offices and meeting spaces. (The pastor of the collaborative will live in the rectory at St. Irene Parish in Carlisle.) This means that my last year in Concord will have some extra administrative work which comes, unfortunately, just at the time I'd rather be disengaging from administration! But this is an important project that I know will serve our parish (and the collaborative) in many ways for many years to come.

By the end of the summer I'll be moving to another rectory (somewhere in close proximity) when the construction begins at the rectory. That will be a first step in my leaving Concord. I've enjoyed living in Monument Square for three particular reasons. First, I do like living by myself. At the end of a day liturgies, meetings, appointments and being with and serving people all day, I do enjoy the quiet that's mine in living alone. Second, there are two spaces in the rectory that are my favorites. One is seasonal - the side porch on the rectory driveway. I suppose it's my version of having a man cave although it doesn't include a flat screen (or any kind of) television or bar! It's just a quiet place to sit and rest and read and listen to music and watch the world go by in Monument Square. Late at night when the square is quiet, my porch is also a great place to pray. The third space is my prayer room in the rectory. It's a small sun room on the back of the house. The Blessed Sacrament is reserved there in a tabernacle and some of my favorite pieces of religious art are on the walls. It's a refuge, a warm and quiet nook where I can begin and end my days with the Lord in prayer. Wherever I go next I know I won't be living alone and I won't have my own porch and prayer room. I hope I'll have good company in my housemate(s) and that there's a house chapel to pray in. I'll consider a nice porch, should there be one, a sure sign from God that I've landed in the right place!

But as I begin this last year here, I know that what I'll miss the most are the people of our parish, my life and prayer and work with you, and this wonderful town of Concord. So I'm going to make an effort in the next twelve months to take in as much as I can of what I've grown to love over nearly a quarter century. I hope this will be a great year even though I know that in many ways it won't be an easy year. So, I ask for your prayers for me and your patience with me in the time ahead.

A reminder: next weekend (June 17) will be our last Sunday 5:00 Mass for the summer. Beginning on the weekend of June 23/24 Mass will be celebrated on the weekends at 5:00 on Saturday and at 8:00 and 10:30 on Sunday mornings.

Another reminder: people in our parish will travel and be away on vacation over the next several months. Please remember that just like at your house, the bills keep arriving in the parish mail box even during the summer. Whether you use our envelopes or not, whether you make your Sunday offering by check or in cash, please be sure to "make up" for the weekends you'll be away. Your faithful continuing support is critical to the fiscal health of our parish!