



A THANK YOU NOTE FROM FR. MIKE...

Well, you probably didn't think you'd be hearing again from me so soon, but I had to have a last chance to say thank you. I am first grateful to the Lord for calling me to be a priest and your pastor for eight years. I had more people and groups to thank beyond what I could do at my farewell. As I write this, I haven't yet gotten to open all your farewell notes as I am still unpacking my bags at OLR. I will treasure those letters and remember you, especially in my daily Masses and prayers on sabbatical, thank you!

No parish functions well with only one person, it takes a great team of clergy, staff, and volunteers. I want to thank in a special way my brother clergy who have been faithful to the Lord and in their service to the parish. Fr. McCarthy first comes to mind as a pillar in the community over decades. He is the hardest working retired priest I know, he still trains the altar servers, and chaplains at Notre Dame HS as well as fulfilling his regular parish duties. Fr. Leo has been a huge help to me and both he and Deacon Jose have been essential anchors with the Spanish community which is thriving. Deacon Greg oversees baptism scheduling and is always willing to help with a funeral and pitch in when needed. We are brothers in the Lord who look out for each other beyond our liturgical and sacramental responsibilities. Thank you for your prayers and support of me over the years.

It took some years to develop not just a good parish staff but one that gets along with mutual respect and common purpose. When Fr. Knotek was here leading our Lenten Mission, he met the staff at SET and marveled that even the maintenance guys were able to talk about Jesus! While not everyone can be named, the office, liturgical planning, operations, maintenance, school faculty and administration all have high morale and accomplish their tasks as a team with little drama or negativity, praise God! Not every parish has a staff like SET that works together well in a productive and supportive way.

Of course, all the clergy and staff exist at a parish to help the people fulfill their Christ-given purpose. We're all called to serve the Lord in varying ways and I'm proud to say that many of the parishioners at St. Elizabeth are giving back to the community and helping others come to know Christ through their ministry. The poor are helped through the food pantry, our very active SVDP Society, and your generous donations which also help OPOP and the Station School. The homebound get Holy Communion and visits and comfort through our ministers of care and shawl ministry. The children are taught about Jesus through the school and RE programs. The Sacrifice of the Mass is enhanced by music and lay ministers. The various men's and women's groups build community through social events as well as gathering for formation and faith sharing.

There are too many good people to mention by name and to thank for their friendship, faith, and good example. I am grateful for you all and am glad that you support the wider Church and the local parish the way you do. The Lord is still calling all of you to follow Him and of course, to support your new spiritual leader, Fr. Deo. He is a good and holy priest who is also grateful for your prayers and gifts. Now is the time of salvation, now is the time to bring Jesus more into our hearts, homes, and the world around us, as Pope Leo XIV reminds us:

*"We are disciples of Christ. Christ goes before us.
The world needs His light. Humanity needs Him as
the bridge to be reached by God and his love."*

God bless,

Fr. Mike

