

Companions on the Journey

June 9, 2019

Dear Friends in Christ,

Two weekends ago the Archdiocese of Philadelphia ordained seven young men to the priesthood of Jesus Christ and each was assigned to a parish as parochial vicar (That is the terminology used now for what was once known as a Curate, then Assistant Pastor, then Associate Pastor then Parochial Vicar. Basically there is a Pastor assigned to each parish in the Archdiocese and if there is sufficient need another priest may be assigned to help minister to the spiritual needs of the parishioners.

Two years ago when Father Paolino was assigned as Parochial Vicar here at Saint Anthony's I was told that his tenure here would most likely be short-lived because of inability to staff all our parishes with Parochial Vicars. In our suburban area the following parishes have had Parochial Vicars but no longer do so: St. Alphonsus, Saint Catherine of Siena, Saint Joseph, Saint Genevieve's, Holy Martyrs, Our Lady Help of Christians, Queen of Peace, Immaculate Conception, Saint James, Saint Luke, Saint David, Saint John of the Cross (closed), Saint Rose of Lima, Epiphany of Our Lord. And now we can add Saint Anthony's to that list. In this last series of assignments at least eight parishes were cut their Parochial Vicar. Please know, there is great need for more priests. The Seminary has been doing a good job of attracting young men in what is a very difficult time but you must pray. I am 72 years old. I still have pretty good energy but I don't bounce back quite so fast all the time.

Father Gerry Canavan, who retired as pastor of St. Rose of Lima parish in Eddystone last year has agreed to help out not only in Sunday but with some of our daily Masses. It is my hope that we will continue to celebrate a 630 Mass each weekday and an 815 Mass each weekday. We are the only parish of all those parishes who offer more than one daily Mass. Presently we have forty to forty-five persons in attendance at our 630 Mass and their presence and prayer is blessing on all of us here. The 815 is in the area of fifty to sixty people. We will probably have to substitute Communion Services for Daily Masses at times just like we do now on Saturday mornings.

Please be sure to thank Father Paolino for his priestly ministry here at Saint Anthony's and wish him well at Saint Christopher's. Pray for him and for me and for all your priests. It is not just something nice to do. It is truly essential.

In the Peace of Christ,
Msgr. McHenry