

Column052823

Companions on the Journey

May 28, 2023

Dear Friends in Christ,

Because of some complicating factors and the physical movement of the Company which produces our parish Bulletin, the deadline for our including items has been pushed back a week or so. What does that mean? I am writing this on May 19 and you will be reading it on May 28. Some of what I write now is new as I know it but may well be well known to you by the time you read it.

That having been said, my replacement has been named. Father Jim McGuinn has been assigned to Saint Anthony's. Father McGuinn will have all the pastoral authority and responsibilities for our parish. But he has also been given the very same authority and responsibilities for Saint Joseph parish in Ambler as well. Both Father Tully and I are stepping down as Pastors Emeriti.

So, Father McGuinn is coming, and Father Saban is staying. There is a retired priest presently living at Saint Joseph's, Father Charles McElroy. As soon as this was announced there were questions. The official designation for Father McGuinn is Parochial Administrator. But popularly you and Saint Joseph parishioners will understand him as pastor. The questions begin right away with: Why? What does this mean for each parish? Will both priests live at one Rectory or will there be some change? Does this mean the parishes will be merged? (Just an aside: Archbishop Perez favors finding ways to revivify our parishes and getting former parishioners to return to the practice of the faith. When that happens and when families are living a sacramental Catholic way of life, there will be more priests and the need to close parishes will go away. It does all depend on the working of the Holy Spirit and the cooperation of all who are parishioners of the two parishes.)

Father McGuinn will be looking for areas and moments where the two Ambler parishes can do certain things together, areas of congruence. Perhaps a Eucharistic Procession through the streets of Ambler where the Procession begins at one parish and ends at the other. Or perhaps the combining of the celebration of Our Lady of Guadeloupe which each parish hosts annually. There are such moments each year.

My counsel to Father Jim is that he will be well received here, and you the parishioners will help him to become closer to Our Lord and holier in his ministry. I say that because that is what happened to me when I first came here thirty-two years ago. You knew that I was very similar at all to Msgr. Sullivan and you thought that he was the glue holding the parish together. But actually, it is the Holy Spirit, living in each one of you, that is the glue holding the parish together. Live the way of Jesus and all will be well. God will provide because God always provides. I will miss you all terribly, but I am stepping down but not ending my relationship with you. I will stay connected, and you can rely on my prayers.

Show Father Jim the customary hospitality of our parish and the Lord will do the rest. Keep inviting to return those who are looking for a way to reconnect. That is a growing reality. Happy Memorial Day and Remember to thank the Lord too.

Peace,
Msgr. McHenry