

20th Sunday of Ordinary Time, 2021

Dear Parishioners of St Charles Borromeo:

As you have heard, I have requested, and Bishop has agreed, retirement from active parish ministry upon my return to the diocese later this week – after picking up Orion at my sister’s! Celebrating 40 years this past July, with 30 of those years in specialized ministry - literally across the country - and quickly approaching my 68th birthday, I have come to discern that it is time for me to make a change in the way I live out my priesthood. This was effective, somewhat fittingly I think, on the *Feast of the Transfiguration*, 6 August 2021.

In addition to the fact that my sobriety needs to be the number-one priority moving forward, I wish to focus my attention on new priorities in ministry. In reading a biography of Pope John XXIII, I found an excellent description of the new direction my vocation is taking me. In a 1929 letter written to a friend the Saint wrote: *“Neither you nor I, dear Segnorina, have had the advantage of a monastic education. Yet as we become older we have to try to adapt our lives to the monastic spirit which can bring us, in addition to order, peace and interior joy, new energies to have a good apostolate.* I do not see myself as stepping away from an active priestly ministry, but rather making a change in order to find new energies to continue to have a good apostolate, one outside the parish setting, that allows me to focus more on prayer, preaching, writing, and fulfilling my obligations as an Oblate of St Benedict at St Mary’s Monastery, Petersham, MA. “Retirement” is not an ending, but a way to begin a new way of ministry.

I join you in welcoming Fr Daniel Cymer as your new pastor and wish him well in his time amongst you. I know you will offer him the same warm hospitality you have extended to me during my time at St Charles Borromeo.

I am grateful for the privilege that has been mine of having been able to be among you here at St Charles Borromeo. The parish remains a part of my daily prayers. Be kind to one another as the Lord has showered down kindness upon you, and *“whatever you do, in word or deed, do in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”* (Colossians, 3,17)

God bless and keep you! I thank you,

Fr John

“Charity is that with which no man is lost, and without which no man is saved.”

St Charles Borromeo 1538-1584