

Dear Family of Ss. Peter & Paul Parish,

I hope you are all in good health and spirits!

I'm sorry to have to speak to you through live-streaming technology, rather than in person, but given the prevailing pandemic situation, this is the mode we have available, and I have information to share with you.

I have been your pastor for the past 11 years. Much has taken place since my first years with you. These years have been good, even though we have all lived through some sadness also as we have bid final farewells to beloved deacons, priests, parish members, and family members. We trust these faithful departed to the care and mercy of God, and pray that they are at peace in His kingdom.

Transitions, and saying good-bye are always bittersweet, but as the people of God's family, we know that change is a given – and is part of God's plan for the good of everyone involved.

After discussions with our bishop and with my Franciscan provincial superior, I have decided that it is time for me to retire from my position as your pastor. Religious Priests, including Franciscans, never really retire – as we always remain active as celebrants, chaplains, or in other such ministries without the administrative demands of leading a parish.

Like any change, it will be strange and perhaps difficult at first, so we all need to pray to be open to the direction of Holy Spirit as He leads us in God's will.

While I feel some sadness as I prepare to leave “SSPP”, I am also very happy for all of you – as you will be welcoming Father Jose Lopez as your new pastoral leader in August of this year.

I have known Fr. Jose since 2009. He is a happy, young priest of our diocese. He is a faithful and dedicated Catholic Priest, loves our Blessed Mother, and is devoted to the Holy Eucharist and Perpetual Adoration. I know that he will be a good pastor for our parish!

So, I ask you to give him a warm welcome to our community of faith, and work with him as he adjusts to his new ministry here.

I will still be here, as your pastor, for the next two and half months! I will find some creative ways of saying my good-byes to all of you, since we cannot yet be together in a public setting.

I plan to leave in early August, and Fr. Jose will arrive shortly thereafter. For now, I want to share with you the Blessing of St. Francis of Assisi:

*May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May He shower you with his Light.
May He give you all His lasting Peace.*

Peace & Blessings in Christ Jesus & His Blessed Mother,

Fr. Tony Cirignani, O.F. M.