

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Dear Friends,

Well, at this point you may have heard the news that we are getting a Parochial Vicar, Fr. Paul Nkolombidzo!

Fr. Nkolombidzo comes from the Archdiocese of Blantyre, Malawi and he is finishing his term of Pastor at St. Monfort Parish in the same city (as a note, it is the largest Parish in his Diocese) and previously he served as the Financial Administrator of his Archdiocese. He was ordained in 2009 and is in his 40's, Fr. Nkolombidzo has served for the last several summers at St. Brendan in Bothell during his vacation time and has been very well received. And he is an extrovert, which makes me excited because I am one of the few extroverted priests I know. He will be living with all of us at St. Alphonsus rectory.

Fr. Nkolombidzo is being sent to us on mission by his Archbishop, but what is his mission? It is to be our Parochial Vicar! Now, I want to take this opportunity to clarify some of the clerical structure you have seen up till now and what you can expect in the future.

Firstly, there are "tiers" of commitment to a Parish and those tiers have titles. Firstly, there is the Pastor, myself, Fr. Parrish. Here is a brief definition of what that means:

PASTOR: *A priest appointed by the archbishop and delegated as the leader of a particular Parish entrusted to him. The Pastor's role, expressed in its threefold mission of teaching, governing and sanctifying (CIC, c. 519), empowers the laity for their mission as light and leaven in the world.*

There's a lot in that and much more could be said, but you get the point.

The next "tier" is that of Parochial Vicar, which none of our parishes in our family have had for the better part of 40 years: a Parochial Vicar. Firstly, "Parochial" means "Of the Pastor", coming from the Latin, "Parochus" meaning Pastor. Vicar means "Substitute" or "Deputy" in Latin (it is where we get the word "vicarious" from). So, a Parochial Vicar is the "Deputy of the Pastor", my "second hand" as it were. Here is a more formal definition:

PAROCHIAL VICAR: *A priest who renders service in Pastoral Ministry as a co-worker with the Pastor, and sharing service in Pastoral Ministry through common counsel and effort and under his authority (CIC, c. 545 §1-2).*

The difference between the Pastor and Vicar has to do with authority, not time. While he is my "deputy" he has the same time commitment to us as a Parish Family as I do, meaning he is full time for us!

So, what about Fr. Ryan, Fr. Sherrard, Fr. Daniel, Fr. Ignatius, and Fr. Madigan? What are they here for and what are their roles? Frs. Ryan and Sherrard are Priests in Residence. Here is a definition:

PRIEST IN RESIDENCE: *A priest who is living at a parish providing sacramental support on occasion.*

In other words, they have no actual responsibility to our Parish. They have full-time missions elsewhere and they help us as they can; they are simply living in residence in our Parish Family. Now, because I haven't had a Vicar this past year they have helped us out quite a bit but that will change in the coming year. While they will remain in residence at St. Alphonsus, along with Fr. Nkolombidzo, they will focus more on their primary missions. We are in the process of discussing what that may look like. Their charity to us and myself this year has been amazing!

As for Frs. Daniel and Ignatius, they have been helping us out as well when Frs. Ryan and Sherrard are unavailable. They too have really helped us, and their charity is equally impressive to me. Fr. Daniel is a Dominican and lives at Blessed Sacrament Parish with his community; in the following year his time with us will be on occasion. Fr. Ignatius is part of a religious order of missionaries and has been helping out for Lent but will return to his order in India in May.

Lastly, Fr. Madigan, whom many of you haven't seen, is a Senior Priest, aka, Retired. Now, he still operates as a priest since there is no such thing as retiring from your vocation (just like never stop being a dad or a mom) but he is VERY part time for us. He resides at St. Benedict Parish. Here is a definition of that:

SENIOR PRIEST: *A priest who has been granted senior status in writing by the Archbishop and either no longer has a continuous ministry assignment in service to the Archdiocese or has less than a half-time assignment from the Archbishop.*

Finally, I want to thank you as parishioners being so flexible this last year! It has been a big and sometimes hard transition and so your understanding has been a godsend to both me and each other, not to mention the staff! I wish I could have communicated this to you earlier, but I thought I should take this exciting news as the opportunity to explain how this all works from the priest end. More will come in the following months, but in the meantime I ask that you please pray for Fr. Nkolombidzo that the Lord may prepare him for the mission to our Parish Family and it's wonderful people!

Blessings,
Fr. Colin Parrish
Pastor: St. Alphonsus, St. Benedict, St. John the Evangelist

Letter **FROM THE PASTOR**

