

From Fr. John

*Farewell*

This is my final column that I am penning as your pastor. On Monday, I will be at the 7:00am Mass and taking care of some final items here later that day. Tuesday, August 1, will begin the new Mass schedule with an 8:00am Mass at St. Raphael that day. Fr. Molini and Fr. Madden will both be in place to begin their tenures as pastor and associate pastor, respectively, over St. Gabriel and St. Raphael the Archangel Parishes.

I know there are still many questions as we transition to the new of All Things New. Probably the two biggest questions are those that will still take time to answer. First, how will it work having one pastor over the two parishes in St. Louis Hills? This is a question that the next year or two will answer as different ideas are brainstormed, tried, and refined. Second, what will happen with the schools? This is a question that we will hopefully receive clarity on this fall. These two questions and many secondary questions flowing from these bigger questions, remind me of when I arrived here in 2018. Shortly after I arrived, I had a meeting full of many questions about me, the future of the parish, and opinions of what should be done to address the status of the parish. I remember not having all the answers and at times being overwhelmed and frustrated as I tried to address these questions and thoughts. What broke that feeling was individuals who stepped forward with the desire to work together to devise a plan that would in time secure the future of our school.

I understand that we all want to meet Fr. Molini and Fr. Madden as soon as possible and to ask our questions or to make known our thoughts and opinions about where our parish is and where it is going in this new reality.

As I prepare to depart St. Raphael, may I suggest a way to approach thinking and expressing these questions, thoughts, and opinions. Questions are good but how can I ask them so that I am ready to be part of the response? How does the comment I want to make about the parish or All Things New build up the community rather than dwell on the negative? Can I make a suggestion and be willing to help implement it or support the decision? In other words, to quote Monsignor Stehly, the bottom line is can we enter the reality after August 1 with that spirit of teamwork and collaboration from which great things come?

Know that I will be ever grateful for my five years at St. Raphael the Archangel Parish. You have helped me to grow as a person and as a priest. I will continue to pray for St. Raphael in my new role of service to the Lord at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary. Please keep Bishop Rivituso, Monsignor Stehly, Fr. Molini, Fr. Madden, Fr. Ritter, Monsignor Simon, and me in your daily prayers, too.

Blessings,

Fr. John