

Father's Notes

May 4, 2025

In mid-January I announced that our new Pastoral Assistant for Administration, Tita Ruiz, was soon to start. Tita has been in place for just over three months, and we're grateful for the stability it's helped to restore. Many of you have had the chance to interact with her and to see, first-hand, the gifts Tita brings. With that, I'll announce to you other changes to our staff.

Continuing with Administration: As you know, Kara Montplaisir, of beloved memory, served the parish as the Pastoral Assistant for Administration (PAA), but also had bookkeeping responsibilities. It's not common (and generally not considered ideal) for those two roles to be held by one person.

When exploring how to move forward with a new PAA, it was our intention to hire a Bookkeeper. Thankfully, that came easily. Monica Schwarz, our Bookkeeper at St. Thomas, agreed to expand her role within our parish family and began, also in January, serving in that role for St. Thomas, St. Philomena and our parish school.

Next is regarding Hispanic Ministry: Isabel Gomez has served an important role in this parish for many years, as Coordinator for Hispanic Ministry, but also as Reception in the parish office. Back in the fall, Isabel informed me of her intention to retire. I recall her telling me that she would be eligible to do so in January, and I pleaded with her to stay until the end of the program year, to which she kindly agreed. Thank you, Isabel! More to come on how we'll express our love and gratitude for all she has done for us.

In any case, we began discussion with Deacon Abel Magaña, the Coordinator for Hispanic Ministry at St. Thomas, to also expand his role within our parish family. Since this past fall, Deacon Abel has already been serving and preaching at St. Philomena's Spanish Masses, as well as offering monthly classes to adults. Starting on July 1st, Deacon Abel will formally begin his new role (which likely will be referred to as Pastoral Assistant for Hispanic Ministry, but still to be established) at both St. Thomas and St. Philomena.

Our plan is to hire someone who will work as an assistant to Deacon Abel and will shoulder much of the administrative responsibilities for Hispanic Ministry. More to come on that very soon.

Finally, regarding Music: For those of you at St. Philomena, after several months of searching for a full-time replacement for our former organist, we are so grateful to have starting with us, beginning in May, our new Music Director, Youngjin Joo. We're blessed to have her talents and dedication, as well as the stability that will come from her presence at all three of our English Masses on Sunday at St. Philomena. Welcome Youngjin!



Father Todd O. Strange (*Pastor*)

+ St. Philomena Parish & School (*Des Moines, WA*)

+ St. Thomas Parish (*Tukwila, WA*)