

## Pastor's Notes

*July 21, 2024*

As mentioned in last week's Pastor's Note, I acknowledge that it's likely hard for you to have a change in priests, especially when you've had fine and beloved priests, as are Fr. Jim Northrop, Fr. Steve Woodland and Fr. Gilberto Mora.

I ask for your openness and patience with anything that's a little different, now that Fr. Ben and I are here. While we have not come up with a plan to change things, inevitably some things will feel different. Why? First, because different priests have different inherent talents and skillsets. Secondly, there are different aspects of priestly and parish ministry that priests find personally lifegiving. A third reason is that different priests have different personalities, and like all people, different things pull us out of our comfort zones.

But it's not just priests that are varied. So are the people in any given parish. Even though a parishioner may believe that everyone else in the parish shares their preferences, it's not the case: The needs and desires of one parishioner is quite different from those of others: "I love it when priests inject humor" in contrast to "I wish you were more reverent." "You must get Mass over in 55 minutes" balanced with "Don't feel like you must rush through the liturgy. We're on God's time."

In the spectrum of those who yearn for more free-flowing liturgies, all the way to those who desire a more traditional feel, I've personally found that I'm too traditional for some and not traditional enough for others. My point is not to bemoan parish ministry or to convey that it's a no-win situation, just to again, ask for your openness and patience as you adjust to new priests.

In each parish, there's a broad range of folks. As your priests, Fr. Ben and I need to do what we can to cast a broad enough net. I, like any priest, may have my personal preferences, but I must consider the broad range of folks entrusted to my pastoral care (and to whom I am entrusted), trying to keep us united, moving together, rather than splintering or alienating one group or another. I'll do my best.

With all this in mind, I hold on to wise advice I once received from a fellow priest, having explained to him sadness I felt over having displeased a few parishioners due to a change we implemented. He said, "Your job is not so much to please any person. Instead, your task is to listen to God to guide you in your ministry, and to do your best to do what he asks of you and to love the souls he entrusts to you."