

Our Lady of the Rosary Parish
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Dear brothers and sisters of Our Lady of the Rosary parish.

I'm writing to you as the liturgical calendar takes us through the exciting and challenging transitional period of Jesus' departure from his disciples and his sending of the Holy Spirit with shocking power. It wasn't an easy time for the disciples to adjust to the physical departure of their Lord and the new manifestations of the Holy Spirit's leadership; but adjust they did! The Church is always enduring varied states of transition, and OLoR is in a significant one now with Fr. Paul parting after a fruitful and full eleven years of ministry. I sincerely join you in lamenting his departure as he's been a friend and companion in priestly ministry to me and I can only take some consolation that he'll not be far away. (Don't tell him I said that!)

When Bishop Gary asked if I could come and take the role of Pastor, while continuing to look after St. Rose of Lima (sadly, simultaneously relinquishing the UVic/Camosun chaplaincy after 12 years), I admit to being a bit shell shocked, and requiring some time to get my heart and head prayerfully wrapped around the idea. It's an immense responsibility and I don't want to fail to expand the Church's mission and evangelization; and yet how to do so with two parishes!? I'm no spring chicken and will be dependent on the Lord more than ever. I'll need a lot of help.

In speaking with both the parish councils prior to the public announcements of the new pastoral appointments, Bishop Gary relayed the rapidity with which we've seen numerous clergy departures from the Diocese necessitating a series of doubling pastoral parish assignments. He stressed the need to ensure that those communities who are remote and rural still have access to priestly ministry and sacraments even if that necessitates that those with access to many parishes and celebrations of sacraments have diminished options. That means us in the Capital Regional District. I am very grateful that I'll have the assistance of Fr. Michael Tran, our most recently ordained Diocesan priest who has been serving at the Cathedral, but he'll not be available until September and I can't be certain of the length of his availability. For the summer months, I am cancelling some (but not all) my holiday plans and will need to both alter Mass times and reduce weekday Masses at St Rose and Our Lady in order to manage. Upon Fr. Michael's arrival, I'll reassess and hopefully be able to increase the availability of the weekday Masses. So after prayerful consideration, consultation, and travel calculation, OLoR will continue to have 3 Sunday Masses and SRL continue with its 2; however all Mass times need to change. I propose for OLoR Saturday 6:00 p.m., Sunday 8:00 and 11:00 a.m. starting on July 15/16. I'll announce the daily Masses as I pay you a visit while on exchange with Fr. Paul at the end of June. I'm sure we'll have many other adjustments to make, but all in good time.

I really do look forward to becoming you pastor and am confident in Christ that God has a great plan in store for us.

Peace in Jesus,
Fr. Dean N. Henderson