

September 17, 2016

My Dear Parishioners and Friends,

On this special occasion of my formal installation as your new pastor, I welcome all of you to St. Ann. In particular fashion, I welcome His Eminence, Donald Cardinal Wuerl, the Archbishop of Washington, who has canonically appointed me as your new Pastor. It is a holy honor to serve you as the Pastor of this incredibly important parish in the heart of upper northwest Washington.

The parish of St. Ann is quite familiar to me. Having lived at Ward Circle up the street on Nebraska Avenue from 1975 to 1978, I used to walk down to the church and go to confession to Monsignor Awalt, the former Pastor for many years. He was an inspiration to me as a young man. Little did I know then that I would be assigned to St. Ann under his tutelage as a newly ordained priest from 1989 to 1992 and now, some 25 years later, assigned again to St. Ann as the Pastor! A full circle!

Arriving here on July 6, my mind and heart were filled with many happy memories of those first years of priesthood – with eight priests living in the rectory! Coming home to you all after so many years is a joyful experience, and I am touched by the warm reception you have given me since the official announcement a couple of months ago. Above all, I am encouraged by the love of so many parishioners I was blessed to know here at St. Ann some 25 years ago and who are still with us today for this special occasion. It's good to be back home! Thank you for making me feel at home with you once again.

St. Ann has so much to offer its parishioners and the community. I sincerely believe that we are blessed as a parish in so many ways and will work together to make this holy place shine as a beacon of hope, a refuge of prayer, and a place of worship for all God's children in an ideally situated location at Tenley Circle. Simply by restoring beautifully the doors of the church in recent days, I would suggest, is a clear symbolic demonstration of our desire to open even wider the doors of our hearts to Christ and to a growing community in Tenleytown. The doors represent our genuine hope to fill our church with more and more people thirsting for Christ's grace and truth. The parish boundaries are huge! We must all work to make our parish inviting to so many who are searching for the truth, beauty, and love – which is truly Catholic. If everyone could bring just one more person to our beautiful church, what an amazing gift that would be!

Under my pastoral guidance, I promise to work closely with you to address our financial situation, the deferred maintenance and repair of our buildings, and, most

importantly, to provide the pastoral care, concern, and reverence for you who are the living stones that make up the visible Body of Christ on this incredible corner of the world in what is arguably one of the busiest locations of human traffic in Washington, DC. Our church will shine to all as a brilliant witness to Catholic faith, worship and music, education and outreach, and with fervent prayer and charity to more and more of the flock that belongs to St. Ann parish. Over time, more will get involved as lay leaders empowered by the Holy Spirit to assist me in re-creating our parish life. We have no other priest or deacon on staff, so I need your help. Spread the word! Good things are happening here at St. Ann!

Finally, a word of gratitude to all who had a hand in preparing and executing this evening's beautiful Mass to celebrate my formal Installation as your new Pastor: to our music director, Mr. Robert Bright, who made possible this printed program and the incredible music with brass and choir; to Mr. Ignacio Cabrera and Mr. William Sawyer who made possible the beautiful floral arrangements; to Mary Agnes Carey and her team of volunteers from the Parish Pastoral Council, the members of the Parish Families Group, and the ladies of the Mother Butler Guild who organized the reception; to all of our liturgical ministers and helpers whose service on and off the altar is so greatly appreciated; to my own family and dear friends; and, with special mention, to the parishioners of Immaculate Conception Church where I recently served for 15 years as Pastor – to you I shall remain forever grateful for preparing me to take on this new pastoral assignment with even greater zeal and enthusiasm. Grateful to you all!

With a father's care and prayer, I will remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Monsignor James D. Watkins  
Pastor

P.S. Stay in touch. [WatkinsJas@aol.com](mailto:WatkinsJas@aol.com)