



Saint Patrick Parish 512 N. Main St. ♦ Wellington, Oh 44090

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17/18 March 2018
Fifth Sunday of Lent

When I first interviewed with the personnel board for the position as your pastor, it was made clear that – when Fr. Cole, pastor of Sacred Heart in Oberlin, retires – Bp. Lennon envisions the pastor of St. Patrick serving also as the pastor of Sacred Heart.

For almost a year now, Fr. Cole has had some health issues. No, they're not life threatening, but they do limit his abilities to do what an active pastor needs to be doing. After a recent discussion with Bp. Perez, he was granted retirement as of July 1st of this year. Bishop Perez shares Bp. Lennon's vision of me serving as pastor of both parish communities.

I know that you will have many questions and concerns, but let me share with you a few facts. Neither parish is closing, and neither parish is merging; St. Pat's will remain as St. Pat's has always been since it was founded in the 1800's → and Sacred Heart will do the same. It's just that you'll be sharing me with the people of Oberlin.

This Wednesday, March 21st at 7pm, a representative from the diocese will be at St. Pat's to share with you details of this new model of parish pastoring (which is quite common out west. In fact, 60% of the parishes in Green Bay, Wisconsin share a pastor). In addition to sharing particulars of this new model, they'll also be here to listen to your hopes for the future, and to answer some of your questions.

Will there be some adjustments and growing pains? Absolutely → for Sacred Heart and for us. We'll need to make adjustments to the weekday and weekend Mass schedules at both parishes so that the spiritual needs of both communities can be met ... but no decisions will be made without soliciting your input first. Bulletin surveys, such as we've done for Christmas, New Years, and holy day Mass times, etc., seem to have worked quite well over the last 2 years, and we'll probably use that same medium.

On Monday, 2 April 2018, we'll begin our transition discussion at a 7pm parish gathering. But, in anticipation of that meeting, let's all do that which is most important to this whole process of shared pastoring: PRAY. Pray for an increase of priestly vocations. Pray for the parish community of Sacred Heart. Pray for the people of St. Pat's. Pray for me. And, most importantly, pray that we all be open to the guidance, direction, and inspirations of the Holy Spirit.

I know this may come as a bit of a surprise to you; for me it's approaching 2 years earlier that I believed it would. But even with an awareness that I'd likely be appointed as pastor of both St. Pat's and Sacred Heart, it wasn't a subject I could actively discuss until Bp. Perez made it official ... which he did this past Friday.

I have always found that "God provides." His presence was profound when I interviewed for pastor at St. Patrick Parish, and He has manifested Himself through many "coincidental" events during my first 2 years at St. Pat's. I am confident God will continue to guide, direct, and inspire us, the St. Patrick Parish family, as you share me with the people of Sacred Heart in Oberlin.

J. David Trask