

Dear Parishioners,

This weekend I announced that Bishop Ricken has given me a new assignment beginning on May 3rd. I am to become the director of Catholic Youth Expeditions in Door County. I shared a few thoughts with you in person, but I wanted to take this opportunity to express some things a bit more thoroughly.

First of all and most importantly, I love you all and I am so grateful for the two years that I got to spend with you. Both St. Anthony and St. Patrick are amazing communities. All of you parishioners, staff, volunteers, and school families made the last two years an incredible gift. Part of being a priest is a willingness to go when the Lord calls. I am excited for the unique challenge that Bishop Ricken has asked me to embrace, but leaving will be extremely hard.

I know that this announcement was unexpected. If you feel hurt or upset I understand. Please know that this was neither my, nor Bishop Ricken's intention. It is important to me that you know that I did not ask for this. I would never do that. I absolutely love it here. However, please do not interpret that as me being upset with the Bishop or disagreeing with his decision. Every year his job of providing priests for our diocese gets increasingly difficult. I would also like you to know that this was not the original plan. Bishop Ricken did not intentionally send me here for only a couple of years. In that respect, it was just as unexpected for him and I as it was for you. This difficult decision is simply a result of our extreme shortage of priests in our diocese.

I would love to share a little bit about my new assignment. Catholic Youth Expeditions is a camping ministry on Kangaroo Lake in Door County. Back in 2007 I attended one of the summer expeditions led by the founder of CYE, Fr. Quinn Mann. Over the following few years the Lord used CYE to lead me to decide to become a priest. I would not be who and where I am without Fr. Quinn and CYE. CYE is also home to Mother Mary Catherine and the Missionaries of the Word. It will be an absolute privilege to live and work with these amazing women. I really love and believe in this ministry, and I am grateful to Bishop Ricken for believing and investing in it. As I mentioned above, it is no secret that we have an extreme shortage of priests in our diocese. CYE has been so successful at inspiring vocations in the past that Bishop decided that it needed another full-time priest after Fr. Quinn led the ministry for almost 20 years. I never expected to be the one asked to lead CYE, but I will certainly give it my best shot.

Due to the fact that I will be leaving earlier than the normal change date, we cannot announce my successor at this time, but that announcement will be coming soon. Fr. Ted Hendricks has agreed to help cover things in May and June, and the permanent successor will arrive on July 1. Everyone is invited to a listening session on March 16th at 5:30pm in St. Anthony's church. It will be led by our Vicar for Clergy, Fr. Luke Ferris. My successor will not be announced at that meeting, but it will be a chance for anyone to share thoughts if they would like. Please know that I will always pray for you, and please pray for me!

God bless you all,
Fr. Greg