

For several months now, I have been looking forward to this weekend. It has been a long summer in Washington, D.C., waiting to come home to Holy Rosary parish, waiting to offer with you and for you the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

And what a blessing it is that, on my first weekend here as pastor, we have the joy of celebrating this glorious feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord. We have the joy of experiencing, with the Apostles, the vision of Jesus in glory. This is what the Transfiguration is all about - the glory of Jesus our Lord.

In the Gospel we hear that Jesus led his three closest Apostles - Peter, James, and John - up the mountain. The Good Shepherd leads His sheep up the mountain. Why? Jesus led them up that mountain to let them see His true identity, to show them that He was the one to whom the law and the prophets were pointing. Jesus led them up the mountain so that He could be transfigured before them, so that the veil of His humanity could be lifted for a moment, so that they would see the glory of God in Jesus.

The Transfiguration was nothing less than a glimpse of heaven. To see the glory of God with our own eyes - that is heaven! And so Peter's response should come as no surprise: "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." With the experience of Jesus' divinity before their eyes, with this glimpse of heaven being given to them, of course they wanted to stay. St. Augustine prayed: "You have

made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You.” Who would want to leave that mountain? Jesus, the Good Shepherd, led Peter, James, and John up the mountain to see the One for whom their hearts were restless - He led them to a glimpse of heaven.

This is my job as your pastor - to imitate the Good Shepherd. My vocation, my call from the Lord is to lead you up the mountain so that together we can see Jesus in all His divine glory. My job as pastor is lead you to heaven!

There is a wonderful story about St. John Vianney, whose feast we just celebrated on Friday. As he arrived in the town of Ars, France to report to his new assignment a young boy showed him the way to the church. As they arrived at the front of the church, St. John Vianney told him: “Thank you for showing me the way to Ars... I will show you the way to Heaven.”

I hope and pray that as your pastor, as your shepherd, God will give me the grace and the strength to imitate the Good Shepherd, to lead you to heaven. But if I hope to fulfill this mission that the Lord has entrusted to me, if I hope to be a faithful shepherd, I must get to know you. As we remember, Jesus said: “I am the Good Shepherd. I know my sheep and mine know Me.”

In my letter in the bulletin this week, I have outlined a plan to help me get to know you and get to know our parish. I am asking that, in the next few months, a few parishioners will

host “coffee gatherings” in their homes where groups of parishioners can meet with me to help us get to know one another and to help me learn what you want for our parish.

As you will see in the letter, I will ask each of you to reflect and share with me on two topics:

First, What is Holy Rosary doing well? What are we known for?

And second, What could we be doing better? Where is God inviting us in the future?

These reflections that you share with me will help me to learn how the Lord is calling us to follow him as the people of Holy Rosary parish. Your reflections will help me to be a better pastor.

I am so happy that the archbishop has sent me here to Holy Rosary! I am so excited to see what the Lord has in store for all of us in the years to come! As I become a pastor for the first time, as I strive to imitate the Good Shepherd, these are my requests of you: Help me to get to know our parish; help me to get to know you; and most importantly pray for me, so that I can show you the way to heaven!