



## Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church

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July 8, 2017

Dear brothers and sisters of Our Lady of the Rosary Parish,

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!” In many of his letters, the great apostle, St. Paul, used these words as a greeting to the faithful in the churches that he had served. And so, as I begin my service to you as pastor, I echo his words of greeting.

First, I offer my gratitude and appreciation to Fr. Ken. You know much more than I the dedication and love he has shown to this community of faith. Our parish is a better place for the service that he offered to all of you. Fr Ken, thank you for the faithfulness and charity you have given in your many years of priesthood and in your years as pastor of Our Lady of the Rosary. I hope that I can be as good a steward and as loving a pastor as you have been.

Second, I offer my thanks to Fr. Jeffrey Montz, who is assisting our parish during this time that I must be absent. He is a good friend and a holy priest, and I trust that you are in the best of hands as he ministers to you.

As you have heard, three years ago, Archbishop Aymond asked me to pursue a degree in canon law (the code of laws which govern the Holy Catholic Church). The canon law program at the Catholic University of America requires that I be in Washington, D.C. for the months of June and July each year. This is why I am unable to be present in the parish for my first month as pastor. However, I learned this summer that my academic program has been reduced by one year, so I will only have one more summer of studies after this one.

As you may imagine, it is difficult to be away from parish ministry for these two months, especially as I begin this new assignment as your pastor. I am very eager to return home and to start in the parish on August 1st. Many have assured me that our parish is a wonderful community, and I look forward to the opportunity to get to know all of you! I will try to use these letters during the month of July to begin to introduce myself to you. I ask you, please, to keep me in your prayers that this month may be a way for the Lord to continue to prepare my heart to be a loving and faithful pastor for you.

Finally, a priest friend recently shared with me some words of Pope St. John Paul II. He said that the first role of a pastor is to pray and intercede for his people. These words continue to ring in my ears in this time away from you. It is a joy to remember you at the altar each time I offer the Holy Mass and in my daily rosary; but, so that I can pray for you in a more concrete way, I invite you to send me any particular needs or intentions you may have. Please email me at: [jhemelt@arch-no.org](mailto:jhemelt@arch-no.org).

Let us keep each other in our prayers as we seek to be faithful disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ!

To Jesus through Mary,

Fr. Jonathan