

To the Faithful of St. Mary of Mercy, Stephen, and St. Martin:

When Bishop DeGrood proposed that I become the Pastor of your parishes, in addition to my current duties as Pastor of Holy Family, my immediate response was yes. Be assured that my confident response was based on faith in God and the promise that He is with us always. My twenty-one years of experience will be helpful but it will need to be improved upon daily by God's Grace. I look forward to working with Msgr. Mangan and Fr. Christensen as we continue the work of proclaiming the Gospel and celebrating the Sacraments in your midst.

A transition like this is never easy, what we are about to undertake is complicated by the current pandemic and the social distancing restrictions that we are asked to follow. In the days ahead I will be making phone contact with parish leaders to introduce myself and to ask for their input as to any immediate issues that need to be addressed. I will also be looking forward to receiving Fr. Christensen's input as well.

For the foreseeable future the schedule and restrictions will remain in place. Msgr. Mangan will be celebrating Mass privately with the Carmelite Sisters. In the event of funerals we will be following the suggestions put forth by the Bishop's office.

Once the restrictions are lifted I plan on maintaining the current weekend Mass schedule. I realize there may be a desire to adjust the schedule immediately, but I believe stability in scheduling is important as we begin this process.

In the event of an emergency I would think that the order of communication would be first Msgr. Mangan who can be contacted at the rectory in Emery at (605) 449-4374. In the event that he cannot be reached I can be contacted either at the Holy Family office (605)996-3639 or the best number is my cell phone (605)-769-1005. Please feel free to put my cell number in the contact list of your phone for your convenience.

I take this opportunity to ask for your prayers as we begin this journey together. May we move forward with the confidence that is ours in Jesus Christ. May we embrace challenge and change as a source of Grace and live together in faith, hope, and love.

Sincerely in Christ.

Fr. Ken