

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ at Our Lady Queen of Heaven,

May God's joy and peace be with you!

Since Archbishop Sartain assigned me to this parish community on July 1st, it may seem to some of you that I have not been present very much. I would like to explain what has been happening to be as transparent as possible with you.

Besides being the pastoral leader here at Our Lady Queen, I still remain the pastoral leader at Holy Rosary parish. What I decided when I accepted this assignment was that I would be present Tuesday through Friday in my office here. On Wednesdays and Thursdays, I would leave at midday to head over to Holy Rosary. Once a month I'd preach and celebrate the Eucharist on Sundays at Holy Rosary, then the other weekends, I'd be at Our Lady Queen of Heaven. Somewhere once a month I'm supposed to take a weekend off. That has not been possible and the Vicar for Clergy office has allowed me for now to substitute 2 days off for now during the week. That has proved difficult because of my knee surgery and recovery, getting ready for Kimberly Peterson's retirement, and balancing other staff member's holidays.

In addition, I also serve on the Guiding Team for the new Diaconate class for the Archdiocese. This calls for me to be present at periodic meetings, serving on the homiletic review board for the candidates requiring me to be at two weekends (November and April) at the Palisades to formally review their homilies, helping to design and present their yearly retreat, and be present with the Candidates and their wives on weekends (like this weekend of Sept. 13-15 when I will be with them at the Palisades). I'll also attend the Deacon Convocation from Oct. 4-6 with all the Deacons of the Archdiocese of Seattle and their wives.

What has complicated my schedule even further has been the situation of the Holy Rosary church building closure since November of 2018. Without going into detail, suffice it to say that I've had far more meetings both in Tacoma and in at the Chancery in Seattle, conference calls, emails, etc. than I had planned or even anticipated. Archbishop Sartain's decree to permanently close the church and eventually raze it has prompted quite a media response in print, television, and online (cf. Holy Rosary's website to read the decree and other documents: <https://holyrosarytacoma.org>). A group formed (outside the parish) to establish funding to keep the church building from being razed, *Save Tacoma's Landmark Church* (STLC). I must point out that this group has no canonical standing by itself, or any official relationship with the Archdiocese, the parish of Holy Rosary, or me. Many people have written letters asking that the decree be revoked, and the STLC group has filed a petition requesting that the Archbishop revoke his decree.

To complicate things even more, Archbishop Peter Sartain retired and we welcomed AB Paul Etienne as our new Ordinary. He will now be handling the appeals that could lengthen the petition process. His transition as our episcopal leader will take some time, as he's had to jump into the deep end of the pool immediately. Thankfully his faith in Christ, and his love for us is without question. You will see that as his ministry unfolds; he is a great blessing for us.

At some point my schedule will even out but for now I would ask for your understanding and patience. We have a great staff and a wonderful spirit as a ministry team who desires to serve you, the members of this faith-filled community, in the Spirit of Jesus. We are especially blessed to have Fr. Vinner as our parish priest. His presence and availability, his joy and love for Christ, is a great gift for us!

I keep you all in my daily prayers!

In God's great love, hope, and mercy,

Deacon Jim