

Farewell Mass – Message

*“I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart;
I will tell of all His wonderful deeds.” (Psalm 9:1)*

Dear Members of our St. Joe’s Family,

Greetings of Peace!

“The best way to show our gratitude to God and people is to accept everything with joy... We may not be able to give much but we can always give the joy that springs from a heart that is in love with God,” says Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta. We need to be grateful for what we are and have. The Christian who walks with the Lord and keeps constant communion with Him will see many reasons for rejoicing and thanksgiving all day of his/her life. In that sense, I owe much gratitude to God and to you my friends, who made a big difference in my life.

“Gratitude is the best attitude!” As the saying goes, today I am filled with gratitude to thank everyone in this beautiful and spirit-filled awesome faith community of St. Joe’s for your prayers, blessings, love, care, and support in the past seven months of my stay and ministry here as Temporary Administrator. Biblically, seven often symbolizes ‘completion’ or ‘perfection.’ From the seven days of Genesis – the creation story to Church’s seven sacraments brings this fullness.

I am very grateful to the Almighty for this wonderful opportunity to serve you while I finish my thesis for my doctoral studies. Also, I am truly grateful to our beloved bishop Most Rev. David L. Ricken D.D., JCL., and the diocesan administration especially Fr. Luke Ferris—the Vicar for Clergy of the Diocese of Green Bay and Deacon Peter Gard—the International Priest Coordinator for having given me this wonderful opportunity to serve the people of God at St. Joseph Parish, Appleton. It really gave me great joy to fulfill my priestly ministry, and daily obligation and to grow in my spirituality. In addition, St. Joe’s is a family; to be ...**HAPPY, HEALTHY, HUMOROUS, HONEST, HUMBLE, HUMANE, AND HOLY.**

I would like to thank each and every one of you for accepting me as your son, brother, friend, spiritual father, and for some Boss in the Administration. Your presence, your faith, your spirituality, your relationship, your friendship, your community spirit, your teamwork, and your ministries in various capacities... all brought me great joy in my daily life. St. Joe’s is not just a parish with a Catholic church and few families. It is a spiritual academy; it is like a Catholic university that teaches us humanitarian values with love and affection. Like many branches of studies, it has many units of committees and spiritual associations to take care of the spiritual and material needs of the people – the parishioners, the poor, and the needy in our neighborhood. St.

Joe's taught me a lot and gave me numerous opportunities to learn many things for my personal and pastoral life, for which I am truly grateful. I feel that thank you isn't enough to express how grateful and overjoyed I am.

At this juncture, I must express my very profound gratitude to our Parish Staff members for their friendly relationship and committed service in helping me and the people of God. They have been a constant source of support and inspiration for my ministry, and for this, I am most grateful. A big "thank you" to Deacon Mark for his assistance in the Mass and Sacrament of Baptism.

I would like to extend my utmost gratitude to all the members of our Parish Council, and Finance Council, who are the pillars of our parish leadership. I deeply appreciate every member of these councils for showing great interest in the growth of St. Joe's. Your dedication, and commitment to our parish, I believe will help us reach our mission goal: **REACHING IN – REACHING OUT – REACHING GOD**. Thank you for everything you do for St. Joe's. I want to offer my sincere gratitude to the members of all the committees, and pious associations for your prayers, support, and encouragement. In a special way, I would like to thank the liturgical committee, sacristans, and altar servers for helping me in the Holy Mass. Herewith, I would like to acknowledge the service of Fr. John Francis Samsa, OFM Cap. and Fr. Dave Funk, OFM Cap. for their service in the Eucharistic celebration.

As I mentioned earlier, I like John the Baptist, came here temporarily to take care of your spiritual needs and prepare the way for the Capuchin Fathers to return. Your intention and my intention... which is our prayer in this regard is heard. Thanks to Blessed Solanus Casey. I believe I have accomplished the work that had been given to me. Happily, I can see St. Joe's is back to the spirit and the Capuchins are back to their ministry. Praise be to God. "Let us give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. And His love endures forever" (Psalm 136:1).

At this juncture, may I ask you to pray continually for my successful ministry in the high school and Holy Cross Parish at Kaukauna.

St. Joseph – Pray for Us! and May God Bless Us!

Fr. Raja Selvam

Parish Administrator (Temporary)

Served: 07.01.2022 – 01.31.2023, (Seven Months)