

A year of blessings...

On July 1, 2024 (while away on vacation), I celebrated the first anniversary of my spiritual journey with the parish community of St. Gregory the Great. In 2018, I had the privilege of offering a Lenten Mission to this parish. Being a missionary preacher then, I was blessed to meet many people and visit many parishes around the United States and beyond. I had no idea I would be blessed to return to this parish to begin an assignment with all of you. God's graciousness never ceases to amaze me.

The call to serve this community came through the discernment process of my religious community, known as the Paulist Fathers. First approached with the possibility of becoming Pastor of St. Gregory the Great Parish in San Diego, I refused. I was deeply involved in my previous assignment in the Bay Area. After much hard work in that community, good things were beginning to happen, and I wanted to see them come to fruition.

My community leadership told me to pray about the possibility more and discuss it with my spiritual director at the time. A few weeks later, the call came once again for me to consider this new assignment, and this time, I asked if someone else would be better suited for the role. The same response from the leadership team came for me to pray, discuss, and reflect. I did as was suggested and came to appreciate the missionary spirit of the priesthood more.

Looking back, unnecessary anxieties about the future clouded my judgment. I quickly found solace and strength in St. Paul's words to the Philippians: "*Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then, the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus*" (Phil. 4:6-7). I accepted the assignment, packed up my possessions, and began my journey to southern California. Since I arrived, I have been met with one blessing after another.

The community has tremendously welcomed me and has been a blessing. You are all so very generous with your love. Your faith and thirst for the truth are impressive. Your willingness to build on the strengths of your past as a parish community while looking toward growth in the future is a true sign of the presence of God. It makes my role as Pastor gratifying and easy.

I am grateful for the St. Gregory the Great Parish staff and the many wonderful ministries of the parish. There are too many people to personally thank by name for helping to settle me into parish life, but please know that all of you are part of my daily thoughts and prayers. I look forward to continuing this journey of blessings that God has granted. God is good...all the time...All the time, God is good!