



Saint Matthew Parish

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Dear Parishioners,

Let me begin by thanking you for all your prayers and support during the past few months of my rehabilitation. My time away has been arduous between physical therapy, different medical procedures, and more. As I stated at the beginning of my leave, my condition is permanent and the goal was to get the disease under control by treating the physical effects so that I could return to ministry. While I have made some progress, there is still much more therapy and treatment that I will have to endure, and my doctors have recommended I extend my leave indefinitely. I believe it would be unjust to leave St. Matthew Parish without a shepherd for what could be a year or more; therefore, I must inform you that I will resign as pastor.

Please know that this was not an easy decision since I have only been your pastor for two years and I have loved every minute of it. However, it's not about the length of time we serve, but what we have done in the time we have served. I am very grateful to God for what we have accomplished together: from re-opening after the pandemic to restarting youth ministry and completing our beautiful self-sustaining recreation center.

I know that the news of my departure, so soon after the death of Monsignor Walter, would tempt us to be angry at God. Instead, please be reminded of the fragility of life and the surprises we encounter along the way, and remember that God is present in all of it and truly walks with us. I could not have imagined that I would be in this situation, but my frustration has turned into consolation and I spend more time in thanksgiving to God for my time with you. I earnestly believe that all of us have been blessed by God during our journey together at St. Matthew. I do not know what God has in store for me and I don't know if I can ever return to fulltime ministry. What I do know is that it has been a privilege to serve you, that you have been a gift to me, and I am profoundly thankful.

I pray that you will embrace your new pastor with the openness and love you showed me, and that together you will continue to grow in your faith in Christ. I do hope to return to ministry somewhere, and I do hope to visit St. Matthew. In the meantime, let's keep one another in our prayers.

Yours in Christ,

Father Jeff