

Statement to the Parishioners of The Holy Name of Jesus Parish, Great Barr.

4th and 5th December 2021

Dear Parishioners,

In our Second Reading today at Mass St. Paul reflects on his Mission in the Church at Philippi. St. Paul had moved on and left others to serve the Church there. St. Paul prays with gratitude, "I pray with joy remembering how you have helped to spread the Good News from the day you first heard it right up to the present."

We can imagine St. Paul having mixed emotions about not being with the Church community anymore but also recognising that the Church's future is in the safe hands of the Lord. St. Paul prays, "I am quite certain that the One who began this good work in you will see that it is finished when the Day of Christ Jesus comes; and God knows how much I miss you all, loving you as Christ Jesus loves you."

We have no doubt that such mixed emotions will be the natural response to this change which Fr. Enrico and I are announcing today. After serving this diocesan parish so faithfully and so well since April 1979, the Sacred Heart Fathers and Brothers of Betharram have concluded that they are no longer in a position to provide clergy and religious for this parish. The parish will be served again by diocesan or other clergy who will be resident here in the parish. We thank all the Sacred Heart Fathers and Brothers who have served this parish so well for 42 years.

The final weekend Masses for Fr. Vincent and Brother Andrew will be the weekend of the 1st and 2nd of January. After which Fr. Kuriakose Thadathil will move into the presbytery and will be appointed your new Parish Priest. Fr. Kuriakose is a very experienced priest who is presently resident at St. Thomas More, Sheldon. There will be opportunities for Fr. Kuriakose to introduce himself in the future and he is very keen to begin his ministry of service with you. Fr. Kuriakose will combine being your Parish Priest with his ministry with the Syro- Malankara Community.

We recognise that this change may be unexpected and perhaps unsettling. Changes and goodbyes often are. Like St. Paul in our second reading today, though, we must recognise this is, firstly, the Lord's parish. Through the ongoing generosity of us all this Parish will remain a flourishing Catholic community.

Both Fr. Enrico and I will be available after Mass if you wish to speak with us. We pray for Fr. Vincent, Brother Andrew, the Sacred Heart Fathers and Brothers, Fr. Kuriakose and above all for you the parishioners in this time of change. May the Lord bless us all.

Yours in Christ,

Bishop Stephen Wright

Fr. Enrico Frigerio SCJ

Canon Richard Walker VG.