

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time



The Pastor's Corner



from the pastor

Assignments of Priests

Every year at this time, each priest in our diocese receives a questionnaire from our Vicar for Clergy, the bishop's officially appointed person to handle, among other things, details involved with the assignments of priests throughout the diocese. (Our current Vicar for Clergy is Monsignor Anthony Cincinnati, who, in my opinion, has done an excellent job in that post.) The questionnaire is designed to give the vicar, the bishop and the Clergy Personnel Committee, a general idea about each priest's ministry preferences. It occurs to me that it might be interesting for parishioners to know how their pastor has replied to the questions.

I hasten to add that these are *my preferences* and they do not mean that the bishop would never ask anything different of me nor do they mean that I would not give serious thought and prayer to his request. I am committed to serve the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston in obedience to my bishop and he has a much broader overview of the needs of the whole diocese than I do. A good example is exactly what happened in 2008. I had been pastor at St. Matthew in Ravenswood for only 3 years and was very, very happy in that assignment and hoped to stay there indefinitely, having said so on my annual questionnaires. When the vicar called me to communicate the bishop's request that I move to Blessed Sacrament, I gave serious thought and prayer to the request. While I grieved my separation from the people of St. Matthew Parish, I understood the need at Blessed Sacrament and why the bishop had asked me, and so accepted the bishop's request to come here as an expression of God's will for me at that time.

The questionnaire states:

"In consideration of personal, ministerial and diocesan needs, please carefully review the following items and indicate your preferences as listed below."

I checked **I do not wish a change of assignment at this time** and added,

"I would like to continue in my present assignment *until retirement or death*. My reason for wishing to remain in this assignment is to achieve the following goals: *building Hispanic ministry; increasing Biblical literacy; expanding neighborhood impact; refining pastoral planning process.*"

In the "Additional Comments" section I wrote:

"I am very happy in my ministry and also glad to mentor Fr. Babu and Fr. Symeon. We have an increasing number of Hispanics becoming regular active members of the parish and there is potential for many more."

So there it is, God willing and the creek don't rise!

