

Thank you so much!

Words cannot describe how much I will miss you. As I said in my very first homily at Sacred Heart and St. Jude, my goal was to help you get to Heaven. I also asked you to help me get to Heaven, since I am far from a worthy servant. Speaking for myself, I am so much closer to God because of you. I pray that I've done the same for you.

Simply put, I love you. Love is understood as both a feeling and a commitment. The feelings I have for you as my first parish family burn within my heart. Serving you has been the joy of my life. You being my spiritual family, I love you with the same love I have for my biological parents', brother and sister because you are the spiritual family God prepared for me when I was ordained and the family that will last for eternal life. You have fulfilled my priesthood because I learned to love you as a father loves his children, even though I'm the age of many of your children or grandchildren!

My commitment to love you was given to me on the day of my ordination when Bishop Gainer announced that I was assigned to Mifflin and Juniata counties. This commitment came to fruition when I had to become creative with my work schedule while running both youth groups, RCIA, the Adult Sunday School program, Spanish ministry, teaching Spanish at the school, Knights of the Holy Temple, St. Vincent DePaul, Communion call ministry, Adoration & Apps (young adult ministry), both Knights of Columbus councils, marriages, baptisms, confessions and, most importantly, weekend Masses. The coordinators and members of each group taught me to see the face of Jesus Christ through their own sacrificial love for Jesus. The hard work for the salvation of our souls is the most fulfilling way I could live my life. I am so happy to be the priest God called to serve Sacred Heart and St. Jude parishes.

Know that you will forever be in my prayers. I will see you again when I visit, and please know that you are always welcome to come visit me! My new address will be at St. Joseph Parish, 2935 Kingston Road, East York, PA 17402.

I know I will see you again, that's why I will say goodbye for now, not just goodbye! However, I would still like to end my letter with the words that only the worthy St. Thomas Moore could utter before he departed from his loved ones,..."Pray for me, and I for thee, that we may meet merrily in Heaven."

May God bless you and Mary keep you,
Fr. Peter Rettig