

## Father Bill Schmidt's Homily During His Last Weekend Assigned to Plainville & Wrentham

It is a little known fact that I share an April 12 birthday with David Letterman. He is three years older than me! That coincidence of birthdays might explain my proclivity over the years to often frame my reflections within 'Top Ten Lists.!' Thus:

*From the Home Office at Vatican City*  
A Top Ten List of  
The Blessings of my Wrentham & Plainville Years

10. The Monkey & Child Reunion
9. 'An Unlikely Story'
8. The Sisters of Jesus and Mary, the Trappistine Nuns of Mount Saint Mary Abbey, the Sisters of Saint Chretienne, Sr Anne Marie Rafferty
7. Mel Gouthro: Patriarch, Patriot and Parishioner
6. The healing of Saint Martha Parish over these years and the greater stability in pastoral leadership in both parishes
5. Henry Carr: Faith & Courage, "A True Man for Others"
4. The Society Saint Vincent de Paul at both parishes
3. Sharing priestly ministry with Fr. Bill Lohan, Fr. John Connolly, Fr. Dennis Loomis, Fr. Joe Mozer and Fr. Bernie Baris.
2. The Youth Group
1. The Ramp

If you were not listed personally, consider yourself # 11 that just missed the cut!

The opening words of a simple, but poignant prayer of Dag Hammarsjold, bespeaks an attitude of gratitude for all the blessings I have experience here:

**“Lord, For all that has been, Thanks.”**

The second line of that prayer is somewhat daunting in its challenge:

**“Lord, For all that is yet to be, Yes!”**

I know that many of you have been wondering why I have not yet announced my new parish assignment. The answer is that I am not going directly to a new parish. When I received the news of the completion of my assignment at Saint Martha and Saint Mary some month ago, I was hesitant about beginning the process of seeking a new parish assignment. Frankly, it did not seem that it would be fair to me or a new parish to make this transition to another parish right now.

Most of you know that my physical health has not been great over the past few years... [which has] ...convinced me that I have to give some serious attention to these health concerns.... I am not getting the sleep I need so oftentimes I am so tired that it has been a challenge just to fulfill my basic parish responsibilities and impossible to initiate new ministries I envisioned for the bereaved and the caretakers of loved ones with chronic conditions. I regret this deeply.

I have asked for permission from the Archdiocese for a sabbatical leave before my next assignment. I will be participating in a residential wellness program for priests that

will address physical, emotional and spiritual issues. Please pray for me that this will be a graced time of rest and renewal preparing me to return to ministry as a healthier, happier, more hopeful and holier priest. Those are my ‘Easter Resolutions’ that I described in this week’s bulletin. This has not an easy decision and I am somewhat apprehensive about entering into unknown territory, but I am trying to emulate the confidence of Our Blessed Mother at the Annunciation **“For all that is yet to be, ‘Yes’, in the confidence that if the Lord leads you to it, He will lead your through it!”** I have experienced a profound sense of peace since I made this decision as I am finally recognizing my need for help. This peace is rooted in my confidence in God’s grace and the loving intercession of Our Lady of Providence. Please pray that I might always discern and be at peace with God’s will as it unfolds continually before me.

It is meaningful for me to celebrate my final Masses at Saint Martha and Saint Mary on “Divine Mercy Sunday.” The Gospel of John proclaims the fullness of God’s mercy in the appearance of the Risen Christ to the Apostles in the Upper Room on Easter. His greeting is a single word, “Peace.” Please pray that the time of rest and renewal ahead of me will be for a time for greater openness to that precious gift of the Risen Christ: Peace of mind and heart.

I will miss Plainville and Wrentham. I had hoped to stay longer, but it is part of the life of a priest to accept when it is time to conclude one assignment to respond to the needs of the Church elsewhere. Please know how much I love being part of these

communities. To borrow some words from Helen Keller, a woman of Wrentham,

“What we have once loved  
We can never lose.  
All that we love deeply  
Becomes a part of us.”