

# Fr. Joe . . . . .

Dear sisters and brothers,

After all the Masses last weekend, I sat down to reflect on everything that had happened in my first week as the Pastor of St. Alphonsus Church. As I said in my homily, everything is new to me. I was overwhelmed with surprise, confusion, excitement and especially blessedness. I am truly blessed with the love, warm welcome and friendliness of this community of faith. I would like to express my gratitude and thanks to God, and to all of you for your encouragement and support.

As I walked into this church, I inherited two big positive changes that my predecessor, Fr. Curt Lambert, the former principal Linda Chorazy, the facilities manager Rich Miceli, the benefactors and the whole parish had been working really hard to make happen.

Firstly, we can enjoy city water now. No more foul smell, ugly color in sinks and toilets, and some other bad effects that the well water can create for the cooling and heating system of our buildings. Father Curt started working on this issue when he first became the Pastor at St. Alphonsus eleven years ago, and he got it done just a few days before he left the parish. I am the person who enjoys the new water the most. And for that I am grateful.

Secondly, St. Alphonsus School has been doing better and better every year. The enrollment for this coming year is about 175 which is 15 students more than last year. In addition, a brand new program, a daycare for two-year-olds is about to open which can help bring more cash to support the school. We should give Linda Chorazy a lot of credit for helping turn the school around. Yes, we still have a lot of work to do, the school enrollment needs to be around 250 in order to be considered healthy. But I believe that we can make it if we do it together.

Besides the two positive changes I just mentioned, there are also two changes among the staff that many of you may be aware of. First, we have a new principal Janice DiVincenzo. I heard many good things about her and after one week working with her, I can tell that Mrs. Divincenzo has a lot of experience and knowledge about running a Catholic school. I hope that with the strong support from the parish, Mrs. DiVincenzo can continue to turn the school around and to make it healthy and thriving.

And finally, we welcome Carol Holden back to work for the parish. As a new and young pastor, I need an experienced and wise staff like Mrs. Holden to help me run the parish. As the Office Manager, Mrs. Holden has been helping me reorganize job descriptions of some staff as well as emphasize the spirit of team work. And as the Pastoral Associate, she will help me watch over the sacramental, spiritual and formational aspects in the parish. In the near future, she will have a chance to tell us more what she plans to do for our church. On paper, she wants to work only 10 hours a week, but in reality, she does not really know how much time she spends for the church.

Again, I am grateful for all the good changes in our parish. Thank you for all your dedication and hard work to build up this community. I believe that if one person can make a difference, we together can make a huge difference for our church, for society, and for the poor.

May God bless you all.

Fr. Joe