

The State of the Parish

“Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past and present are certain to miss the future.” JFK

Friends, these past few weeks have been difficult for me, and I know they have been hard for many of you as well. I have heard from several people in our parish who expressed that Corpus Christi is changing and feel that the parish they knew and loved has been left behind. Pam’s retirement, Luke’s resignation, and the display of the new tapestry have all occurred in a brief period. Others have perceived a change in theological direction. Change is challenging, particularly when so much of it takes place at once.

There is no doubt we are undergoing a difficult period of transition. Part of this is just natural change that takes place over time. Part of this is my own vision for campus ministry and what is necessary to serve the changing needs of a university parish and our students. Another part of this transition is the trend of younger, active Catholics moving toward a more traditional expression of Catholicism. This is a national, and international, trend that is not unique to Corpus Christi. We are lucky to have such a growing, committed, and vibrant group of students who worship and grow spiritually here. I must prioritize their desires and needs while trying to help them see a broader vision of the Church.

In clarifying our mission as a student parish, I in no way want to diminish the importance of our permanent community. The permanent community has built and sustained this parish that our students call home. The students benefit tremendously from your prayers, your life experiences, and your financial support. My hope is that we can rebuild the connection between the students and permanent community that was starting to flourish before COVID.

I know there is a degree of confusion and unrest within the permanent community related to these changes. Some parishioners are unhappy and intend to leave the parish while others have pledged their continued support and commitment to Corpus Christi. Every parish member is important to this faith community, and I pray that those considering change pray for guidance in their quest for what is spiritually best for them. I have reached out to our Pastoral Council members to provide advice and counsel. Their support will help broaden my perspective as we address these challenges.

I also understand the deep appreciation our congregation has for our music ministry and Luke’s influence on it over the past 20 years. I can tell you that many of the thoughts and concerns that have been communicated to me about Luke’s departure do not reflect the entire situation. It would be inappropriate for me to comment in this letter on what is in large part a personnel matter. But what I can share is my commitment to searching for and building a music ministry program which will meet or exceed the expectations of our students and permanent community. I plan to work with a group of parish advisors to set a vision for this process and bring stability and excellence to this important part of our parish life.

I encourage you to contact me if you have thoughts or questions about this matter, or if you would like to express your concerns or make suggestions about how to move forward for the benefit of our parishioners.

I pray for patience and healing for myself and for the parish as we undergo this transition. I have tried to move slowly with change, to be prudent in my pastoral decisions, and to be open to different opinions. Your collective support and involvement will help us succeed. I will never tire of serving you as we move forward together to advance the mission of Corpus Christi University Parish.

In Christ,

Fr. Jeremy