



Dear Friends,

“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.”
(Ecclesiastes, chpt. 3)

In 1965 the rock group The Byrds turned this line into a hit song - “To everything (turn, turn, turn), there is a season,” they sang. I was a senior in High School when they first sang that song, which gives away my age. I have often marveled at how fast kids grow up, paying little attention to my own “growing up.” However, Mother Nature has her ways of letting us know how many calendars we have hung on the wall.

This coming spring I will turn 74. 74!! How did that happen? And with age, as my contemporaries can attest, comes the proof of passing time. Old friends like “stamina” and “energy” quietly slip away like friends moving to another part of the country, while new friends like “arthritis” and “fatigue” become part of our lives. The arrival of these new friends and that number mentioned above have whispered to me it’s time for a change of seasons. While my spirit may be willing to carry on, my flesh has noticed that all the leaves have changed color.

So, I asked the Archbishop for permission to retire and he said yes. So, I will retire on June 30, 2021.

We have journeyed together through a lot these last few years, especially these last 3 as we embarked on founding a new parish - Holy Guardian Angels. As with all journeys God calls us to, this one was challenging and, if we’re honest, rather rough. But “there’s a time and purpose for everything under heaven.” It’s a gentle reminder by our Lord that nothing lasts forever, except him.

Aside from the hard knocks of aging, the thing that made me decided to retire now was how well I think we have taken to this new season of “Holy Guardian Angels.” (“A time to plant.... a time to build.”) It’s still a very new experience and probably will continue to be awkward for some time to come. Plants take time to grow. But I can see a willingness to forge a new parish, a parish that will become a bright spot in the BrookPark section of the archdiocese. I am especially heartened by our new Parish Pastoral Council. This Council, most of whom are under 35, are an enthusiastic group looking to the future and relying on the Holy Spirit to get us there.

At this juncture, I am certain that what our people need is a pastor with the commitment and energy to do the work that will help this community move into that future. Our new parish requires a pastor who can commit to the long haul. An honest assessment on my part has led me to conclude that I’m not that man. That said, please keep in mind that the Holy Spirit has led us into this endeavor in “new-parish” building and will find the person who will help you to continue building until it is completed.

I don't wish to ignore the current realities in the Archdiocese. While we may desire a young, energetic and forward looking man to be the new pastor, the pool of priests the Priests' Personnel Board has to choose from continues to shrink. I think it a good idea to begin right now petitioning the Lord to send you a man who can dream with you and help you to make that dream a reality. Pray, too, for the staff and Parish Council who will be essential in building that future.

Over the next several months people from the Archdiocese will be consulting with the leadership to help choose my successor. I will be praying that the Spirit and the Holy Guardian Angels will walk with you through that process. I will still be pastoring Holy Guardian Angels right up to and through the transition. Meanwhile, we have Lent, Easter, First Communions and Confirmations coming up. By God's, grace I hope we will also see a change in the way we're living as more and more of the vaccine is distributed.

There's lots left to do and to celebrate. So, let's get to it.

Fr. Denis