



Dear Parishioners of Holy Guardian Angels,

*Thank you!* That expression cannot convey my gratitude to all who in so many ways said goodbye a month ago. So many wonderful wishes, so many kind and generous gifts, I am overwhelmed by your kindness. “Thank you” seems so puny, too small to convey what I feel.

A priest grows into being part of the parish he is sent to. It takes time, sometimes a couple of years, for him to really get to know and become part of a faith community. I had that time to get to know the folks of St. Louise de Marillac. I came to know the core people who graciously gave their time and talent to help run the parish; those who helped when they could and those who joined us on Sunday.

Then came *Renew My Church*. During the tumultuous period leading up to the combining of our two parishes, I met a few people from St. Barbara. They were nice people struggling like the rest of us with this process. The experience of those very difficult meetings revealed the anguish everyone felt at having to move toward a merger no one really wanted, yet had to be done. Getting to know the folks of St. Barbara’s through the painful time of merging was tough. But over the 2 years I was pastor of Holy Guardian Angels, I came to know how good the people of St. Barbara were. All of us mourned the loss of “our parish.”

As weird as it sounds, Covid 19 became the catalyst to bring us all together. We all had to submit to the restrictions and we all shared the fear that disease brought on us. Duress that brings out the best in people. I quickly learned the kindheartedness of the folks at St. Barbara and St. Louise and was impressed with the willingness of many to strive to make our new parish work. I know how difficult this was for everyone and I bless all who embraced our new parish and are willing to work for it to succeed.

I can’t tell you how grateful I am for all who have embraced the future of HGA and choose to work for that future to become a reality. As the founding pastor, I feel joy watching the people of our new parish begin to take their first steps. For this, I am deeply grateful. Many other combined parishes have not experienced what you have accomplished in so short a time. May the Lord, who has begun this good work in you, bring it to completion.

Last month I walked away from HGA with the best wishes of so many. When I got the chance to look into the box of cards and the gifts, I was surprised to see so many. I was downright shocked when I opened them and found what was inside. I never expected that. If I tried to answer each and every one of those cards, it would take me until Christmas to express my gratitude. I hope you will accept this letter which contains all the gratitude I have in my heart. It has been my honor to serve you.

May God bless you all, keep you in the palm of his hand; and bless you with his peace.

*Fr. Denis*