

*“Now to Him who is able to do more than we can ask or imagine, according to His power be glory forever in the Church and in Christ Jesus.” (Eph. 3: 20).*

I want to sincerely thank God for giving me the privilege to serve as a priest here in St Rose and the opportunity to further learn in my priestly journey. St Rose is a very active, vibrant, and very welcoming parish. The faith of the people is very alive and inspiring.

Thank you immensely, Fr. Gerard the Pastor. You were not just the pastor, but you were indeed the father of the rectory and an elder brother in the priestly ministry, and a committed administrator. I learned so much from you. You were patient and kind with me, particularly in the early months of learning how things work here in St Rose. I am very grateful for those fraternal corrections you gave me. I was personally touched by the way you brought me to the office to point out what needs to be improved. They meant so much to me. God bless you.

I am equally grateful to you, Fr. Frank. You have the beautiful gift of lightening our moods with your teasing and jokes amidst the busy days here in the rectory. You are very committed to your task. I sincerely appreciate your heads up concerning upcoming events and your working me through questions I needed clarifications on. In you, I saw a friend and a brother priest who always anticipated the future events and kept me updated on what was expected of me. You were kind and dynamic on schedule matters which show your charity and heart of love. You and Fr. Gerard made the rectory a true family and a true school of love and faith. I felt deeply accepted. Thank you, Fr. Frank.

I want to appreciate the Deacons here in St Rose - Deacons Frank, Sean, Mike, and Tommy. Each of you helped me in adjusting to the appropriate liturgical details here in the parish. You give St Rose the beauty of a complete ecclesial liturgy. May God bless you immensely.

Thank you, too, to the wonderful rectory staff. The collaboration and uniqueness that each of you brings to the Rectory make me always look forward to seeing you during the rectory office hours. You were part of those who had to deal with the difficult beginnings with the mistakes that went with them. You all assisted me to fit into the parish structure and how things work here. Each of you, according to your offices, made this one year a truly memorable experience for me. I appreciate you all and plead that you understand that I do not need to list all your names individually. You are just an amazing team to work with. Thanks, Pat, for being the mother of the house.

I want to single out the sacristans because you are the liturgical administrators behind the scenes. Your deep commitments and sacrifices were elating to me. Thanks, Paulette, Delaney, Lori, and Frank. You guided me effectively in terms of liturgy. You were always there with appropriate instructions that ensured the smooth running of liturgical ceremonies. May God bless and reward you.

To you, the lovely parishioners of St Rose, I cannot put into words how you made this parish a true home for me. May God bless you, and I love you all. Your faith and dedication were indeed a source of inner strength to me. You were an essential part of this pastoral learning experience for me. I was moved to greater commitment of faith and prayers when I saw those of you who were always here! You are the heroes of this great parish. The Bishop had sent me to come and learn from you, and I am glad that I learned a lot that will help me fit in better in Bethpage. Thank you, Michael Lamothe and Annalisa Klebers. Both of you were my tutors in American accent. Thanks for your patience in taking me through the transition in accent. As you know, it is a project in process and not a finished product at all. May God bless and reward your sacrifices and patience in teaching me. I was glad to encounter St Rose School with the dynamism that Mr. Brian Jensen and the staff bring. I will miss the innocence of the school kids and the life they bring to this compound.

I was privileged, too, to learn from the Music Ministry and choir led by Mr. John Buckle. John, you are humble and dedicated. You never said no to any request. The choir in St Rose enriched my savoring of sacred music, and I will surely miss the choirs here. The Rosary Society was, for me, a support prayer group. Your dedication to praying the Rosary and interceding for the entire parish is amazing to behold. Thank you: Linda, Nancy, Vicky, and Maritza who provide the leadership to the group. Thank you, Fr Gerard, for giving me the privilege to serve as the moderator of the Rosary Society. I was glad to see, too, that the Miraculous Medal devotion which is Vincentian is alive here in St Rose.

Permit me to end this note of appreciation by saying that I have found a true home here in St Rose of Lima Parish. I am just a few blocks away, and I will be very glad to keep coming around. May the Lord continue to renew all of us in faith in our pilgrim journey of salvation. I sincerely ask pardon for anyone who felt uncomfortable with any of my actions; I acted in goodwill and these were part of the learning process that is not immune from errors. To those I didn't single out in mentioning names, please just know that your contribution towards this one year of pastoral ministry is greater. May God bless you all. I truly love all of you. Thank you immensely.

Rev. Michael Iroh, CM