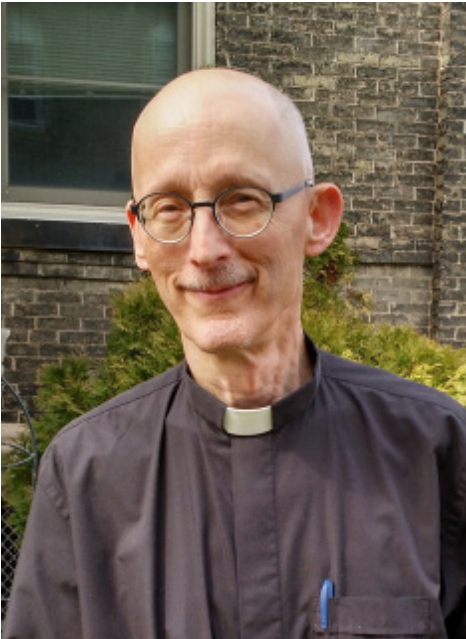


Fr. Mike Reflects as He Prepares to Retire

Spring 2018



Before he departs from SS. Peter & Paul for retirement and his new home at the rectory of St. John Paul II parish, Fr. Mike Michalski offers his thoughts on his tenure as pastor and what he'll be doing next.

Q. What do you think are the highlights of your time as pastor here?

A. The first is the fact that we got Catholic East on a stable footing. It was a collaborative effort with the pastors that started with hiring a great principal. I'm really proud, because we're now at a point where the school has grown to capacity. Another accomplishment I am proud of is the forming of

an in solidum team with Fr. Tim and Fr. Brian as we worked to coordinate the efforts of four parishes, six churches, and the hiring of common staff for the four parishes. I know it was hard, but we pioneered something new, and I think it made us stronger. Pastoral council has really evolved into something great too.

Q. What will you miss most about life as a pastor? What will you miss least?

A. I'll miss the contact with people of different ages, celebrating weddings, funerals, and baptisms, and being part of people's lives. I'll miss the connection with our sister parish in Chiapas. I actually visited Chiapas in 2002 before I came here, and I like that global connection. I'm really going to miss the good liturgies and good music here; people pray and sing so well here. I'm not going to miss the meetings and discussions about budgets and the difficult decisions.

Q. If people want to make a donation in your honor, you suggested they make gifts to St. Rose of Lima Parish at 31st Street and Clyborn. Why?

A. It has an important part in my life story. It was my first pastorate, *(continued on back)*

Goodbye Receptions for Fr. Mike

There will be four different opportunities to say goodbye to Fr. Mike in the coming weeks.

Saturday, June 2 after the 4 pm mass at Our Lady of Divine Providence–St. Casmir Parish

Sunday, June 3 after the 9:30 am mass at SS. Peter & Paul

Saturday, June 9 after the 4:30 pm mass at Old St. Mary's

Sunday, June 10 after the 10:30 am mass at Three Holy Women–Holy Rosary Parish

Fr. Mike's last weekend at SS. Peter & Paul is June 16–17.

and I was there from December 1987 to June 1994. I had decided I wanted to work in an inner city parish. It was bilingual, so we had one Mass in English and one in Spanish, and I went to San Antonio, Texas during that time to learn Spanish. Fr. Tim shepherds the inner city parishes now, and I thought it would be good to help there.

Q. What are you doing next?

A. That's a good question! I'm still trying to figure that out. The thing that keeps coming to mind is spiritual direction. There is certainly a need for spiritual directors in our communities, and I'd like to get some more training in that area. I've thought about volunteering with something not related to the church, maybe English as a second language programs. I've thought about auditing some college courses, and maybe learning a new language.

Q. What practices sustain your faith?

A. I have a hunger and thirst for scripture, which sustains me very much. I keep reading and re-reading passages and seeing things I've never seen before. Priests are obliged to pray the Liturgy of the Hours, and I find comfort in that. Sometimes I pray it in English, sometimes in Spanish. I try to practice mindfulness. I like a book by Thich Nhat Hanh about mindfulness and trying to live in the present moment, which is very much in line with Catholic thinking. Sometimes I journal at the end of the day, and write down what God is saying. I find that if I don't pray, my life is out of whack.

Q. Many parishioners think of you as a pretty holy man. How do you see yourself?

A. At this point in my life I see myself as a person who is always rediscovering my relationship with Jesus. Every couple of years you kind of rediscover him. I also think of myself as a kind and

compassionate person, but most people don't see the humorous side of me. My life is a little like an episode of I Love Lucy. I am very accident-prone, and it isn't a good week unless I spill something or hit my head. I come across as very serious, but I just have to laugh at the craziness of my life.

Q. What parting words would you like to leave us with?

A. All of life is a gift and a blessing. In a world of greed, competition, and discrimination among so many groups and religions, I am learning that God is in control of everything, including my life. Life is not an accomplishment I've achieved by myself; it's important to understand that it's a gift and blessing that I have not merited. Especially as I clean out my apartment and move to a new location, I realize the adage: We must live simply so that others may simply live. I have also learned to never take anything for granted.

If you would like to make a donation in honor of Fr. Mike for St. Rose of Lima Parish, you can drop a check, written out to St. Rose of Lima Parish, in the collection basket at any mass. Write "Fr. Mike" in the memo line.