

September 21, 2021

Dear Friends at the Thomas Merton Center,

With the exception of a hiatus while we were all sheltering-in-place, I have been joining you for the celebration of the Eucharist once a month for several years. It has been a joy and a privilege to celebrate with a community so dedicated to the Eucharist and to an adult experience of Catholic practice, which includes a commitment to adult education and social justice. I shall always be grateful for this opportunity.

Since restrictions were lessened so that we could once again gather for Mass in person, I have discovered in several settings that I do not have the energy and stamina I had before the pandemic. Consequently, after prayer, reflection and conversation with my spiritual director, I have decided to significantly reduce the number of public Masses I celebrate.

Although this decision means I will not be able to continue celebrating with you at the 9 o'clock Sunday Mass, I will join you on Oct. 10, Nov. 14 and Dec. 12 to give time to find other priests to celebrate with you. One priest you have already met is Father John Auther, S.J. from the Jesuit Retreat Center in Los Altos.

Looking back, my years in active ordained ministry went quickly (12 years at St. Nicholas, 3 years at El Retiro, and four years as a sacramental supply priest). I now feel the Lord is beckoning me to a more settled time of retirement with its opportunities to be with family and for prayer and contemplation. I shall miss you, and I will pray for you. Please pray for me as well.

Your friend, Larry Percell