

THE DIOCESE OF KALAMAZOO

Renew Faith • Build Communion • Inspire Hope

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

To the Collaborative of St. Mary of the Lake Parish in New Buffalo, St. Mary of the Assumption Parish in Three Oaks, and St. Agnes Parish in Sawyer; and the Collaborative of St. Mary Parish in Paw Paw, and St. Jude Parish in Gobles

March 9, 2021

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Greetings in the Lord Jesus!

I write to all of you in the parishes listed above, to share with you some sad news with regard to your pastors, Fr. John Peter Ambrose, MSFS, and Fr. Joseph Xavier, MSFS. It is hard to believe that each of them has been serving here in the Diocese of Kalamazoo for more than a decade, and the time has come for them to return to their Provincial home in Tamil Nadu, India, at the end of June. This is a particular sadness for me, as your Bishop. I have come to know and have great affection for both of them as brother priests. The norms for missionary work within their Community require that a priest return home after ten years away, and the two of them have served generously beyond what was prescribed. I have received word from their Superiors that they have indeed been recalled, and they are to conclude their pastoral ministry in their respective Collaboratives by June 30, 2021.

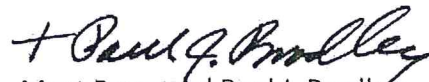
As both of them can attest, this was not news that I welcomed or desired: quite the contrary, given our needs here. Fr. John and Fr. Joseph are members of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales (MSFS), a Religious Order within the Church, that has its own governance and autonomy, given by the Holy See when the Community was officially established. Because they are in many places throughout the world, and have their own particular charism from the Holy Spirit, they live out their consecrated lives under obedience to their Superiors within the Community. Like other Religious Communities who are missionaries, they leave their homes to assist a Local Church (Diocese) in other parts of the world in providing priestly care. In other words, when the two priests in question arrived here, we all knew that they were only "on loan" for a time, unlike the priests belonging to our Diocese, who are permanently attached here. For this reason, the decision for them to return home was determined by their Superiors, as it was not my decisions to make. Anyone familiar with obedience knows that the Lord works for the good of all through those decisions, no matter how difficult they may be.

In preparing to bid farewell to these two beloved priests, who have dedicated more than a decade of their lives to serving the Diocese and the parishes entrusted to their care, please join

with me in prayerful gratitude to our Lord for the gifts and graces He has provided to all of us through their ministry, asking that they be rewarded with peace, joy, and every blessing as they continue to serve His Flock wherever He chooses in the years to come.

As always, please know of my gratitude to each of you for your understanding as we anticipate these upcoming transitions, and be assured of my remembrances of you before the Lord for a holy and fruitful Lenten Season.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Paul J. Bradley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Paul J. Bradley
Bishop of Kalamazoo