

Today, as the Christmas season comes to an end, I reflect back upon the past few weeks. It was a joy being with many of you for Masses during my time visiting home. I was moved as well by how many parishioners asked me to pray for them and loved ones in need.

Since these short visits don't allow for many extended conversations, I wanted to share a little about what I have been doing and will be doing in the coming year.

It's been a wonderful year. This is the third year of my assignment in Minneapolis, serving at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul as a priest chaplain in campus ministry and as an adjunct theology professor. This past semester, I had the opportunity to prepare and teach a new course in Catholic Sacred Music, putting my past liturgical music studies to good use. Otherwise, I teach mainly scripture courses and serve the college students in a variety of programs and ministries. I live in a vibrant community of (currently...but ever changing!) eight Dominicans, with four of us at the university and others at parishes or other ministries. Life here in Minnesota is good.

As nice as it is to feel "settled in," I'm now preparing to conclude my first assignment and begin a new adventure. I was recently approved to go on for further studies, which is normal for us Dominicans after a few years of initial ministry. This summer I'll be moving to Rome to begin studies in the Fall at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (commonly known as "the Angelicum"). I'll be pursuing a Doctorate in Spirituality, which should take about four years, after which I'll be qualified to teach full time, to work in seminaries, to do spiritual counseling, and assist with the formation of our younger brothers. I'm very excited (and a bit nervous!) to be living in an international community and diving back into studies. Yet if there's one thing I'm experienced at, it's being a student!

I hope to be back in Ohio sometime this summer. Until then, know that you are in my prayers, and have a blessed new year!



Fr. James-Peter Trares, OP