

Fr. Alvarez Farewell Message

Time flies when you're having fun! The past eight years during which I served you as pastor have gone by very quickly for me. Maybe the fact that I have enjoyed them immensely has something to do with that. And you have certainly much to do with the fact that I have enjoyed them immensely!

When Archbishop Wenski assigned me here in 2011 he told me, "It's a wonderful community, but the pastor has been very sick for years so there are about eighty-five pastors there now and I need you to little by little reel them in and have you just be the one pastor." Difficult as that may have sounded, the task proved to be not so daunting. It became not only possible, but delightful because of what he said about who you are – a *wonderful* community. Your affection, support, collaboration, hard work, and genuine care for the parish and me made it rather easy through my time here to do the job I was entrusted with. For this I am deeply grateful.

As I journey on and thank the Lord for the many blessings I received here, be assured that I consider you, the people of the parish, to have been the biggest. You are the greatest memory of Our Lady of the Lakes that I take with me. It should come as no surprise since God's Kingdom is not about things, ideas, or achievements, but about people. The fact that I feel this way should tell us that God's Kingdom is very much alive and well here!

As you welcome a new shepherd, keep God's Kingdom alive by loving, enjoying and supporting him as you did me and continuing to cherish one another and time will keep flying by. With a big smile I fondly take you with me in my heart and prayers and ask you to keep me in yours. It's been eight years, 96 months and 2,920 days, but who's counted? It's been fun!

