

Holy Trinity

When I came to St. Anthony's five years ago, I believed that you were going to help me more than I could ever help you. I wanted to experience how different cultures expressed their faith and to encounter the work of God in a variety of ways. I was hoping for a renewed spirit. You have given me this and more.

You have all been patient with me. When I arrived, I did not know the Spanish language or culture well enough to serve people here as they deserve. I'm better, but still not as fluent as I should be. Nonetheless, individuals and families from our hispanic community have opened their hearts to me.

My inability to communicate in Vietnamese was even more frustrating because our Vietnamese families are so faithful to this parish. I have learned only a little. I realize now - if it's this hard for me to learn their language, how hard it is for them to learn mine. Their faith, humility, service and hospitality have made a deep impression on me.

Many longtime members of this community remain faithful to it in spite of many changes over the years. This parish was built on the soil of Italy and other European countries, and it continues to bear fruits of openness and creativity.

Most recently refugee families from Africa appeared on our doorstep, and the generous people of this parish have welcomed them. I hear people from other parts of the city say they want to raise their children to appreciate other languages and cultures. I tell them, there's a simple way to do that: Move to northeast Kansas City. Worship at St. Anthony's. Anyone can receive what people have given me: a broader view of the world and a more expansive heart.

Moses experienced this when he climbed Mount Sinai, as we hear in today's first reading. He learned that God is "merciful, gracious, slow to anger, rich in kindness and fidelity." Moses also saw his own people in contrast: "stiff-necked" and full of "wickedness and sins." Yet God loved them and led them.

As you know, I too can be stiff-necked and full of wickedness and sins. I ask your pardon for the offenses I committed against any of you. And I thank you for showing me the qualities of God: You are "merciful, gracious, slow to anger, rich in kindness and fidelity."

Next weekend I will go to Conception Abbey to reflect on the past and prepare for the future. Fr. Macario will come here. Then you'll meet Father Andrés Moreno, your new priest. He is full of faith, anxious to serve, excited to meet you, and grateful for this opportunity. His English is better than my Spanish. When I told him I was trying to learn Vietnamese, he asked, "What have you done to me?" I know you will be as patient with him as you were with me.

I will become pastor at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. St. Anthony's is your parish, but the cathedral is also the home of every Catholic in the diocese. You are always welcome to worship there.

Finally, I wish to thank our staff: Deacon Tom Powell, Nora Vasquez, Cathy Hernández, and José Zamora. They serve this parish with a generous heart and a profound faith. To all of you who showed me the face of our merciful, gracious, kind and faithful God in all its vibrant color, thank you.

SUNDAY, JUNE 11, 2017