SAINT ANTHONY
CATHOLIC CHURCH

Dear St. Anthony's Family,

After more than 14 years serving as pastor of St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church, I'll be stepping down from my role in April 2027. Over much of the past decade, my work as a chaplain in the Michigan Army National Guard has also called me to be ready for training, formation, and service to our country. Many of you already know that my unit is scheduled to deploy to the Middle East after Easter, and I'll be away for at least 11 months. I look forward to celebrating Easter with the St. Anthony's community at the end of March before leaving for military service the following week.

From April through June 2027, Father Paul Xavier will be available to support most of our parish's sacramental and pastoral needs, with help from other diocesan priests as needed. Bishop Earl has shared that Father Todd Koenigsknecht of Sacred Heart will serve as acting administrator of St. Anthony's during this three-month transition and will be available to help with any remaining administrative or pastoral needs. In July 2027, a new priest will be installed as pastor of St. Anthony's. The diocese follows a thoughtful process when discerning priest assignments to parishes, and details about new placements are expected to be shared publicly sometime in spring 2027.

I don't yet know what God has in store for me after my deployment, but I do know that I won't be returning to St. Anthony's as pastor. Our staff, Bishop Earl, my fellow priests, and I have been preparing for this transition, and I'm confident that the parish will be in good hands in the spring of 2027. I'm even more confident that everything here is safely in God's hands. I've watched Him do amazing work at St. Anthony's over the past 14 years, and I know He will continue to bear good fruit.

I'll continue to be away periodically for drills over the coming months, but I'll remain available to meet with parishioners, as always. I look forward to serving this parish through another Advent and Lenten season.

To recap the most important details:

- I will step down as pastor of this parish when I depart for deployment as an Army chaplain in April 2027.
- I will continue serving as pastor through Advent and Lent, although I will be away periodically for military drills.
- Fr. Paul Xavier and other priests from the diocese will attend to our sacramental needs from April through June 2027, while Fr. Todd Koenigsknecht will serve as our acting administrator.
- In July 2027, a new pastor will be installed at St. Anthony's. We anticipate that the Diocese of Lansing will publicly announce the incoming pastor sometime in the spring of 2027.

Please keep my family and me in your prayers as we navigate this transition. I would also be grateful for your prayers for the clergy serving our parish in the interim, for the installation of a new bishop in our diocese, and for the installation of a new pastor at our parish.

It's been a true joy and honor to serve as pastor at St. Anthony's all these years, and I'm especially grateful for this final season we have together.

In Peace,
Father Dave