

Dear Friends in Christ:

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for the warm welcome you've extended to me since my arrival at the beginning of the month. Even though I've only been here a few weeks, I've already discovered what a wonderful parish family we have at St. Gall! Thank you, as well, for all the prayers you've been saying for me since the announcement was made about the transfers this year. I have been praying for you ever since that moment, too. I feel so blessed to be here with you, and to be able to follow in the footsteps of all the faithful priests and lay people who have worked so hard over the years to make our parish the warm and welcoming community it has become. And I look forward to being a part of keeping that going with all of you in the years ahead! I owe a special debt of gratitude to our wonderful parish staff and to seminarian Jeff for being so helpful in getting me oriented and settled in.

As I have mentioned in homilies and in conversation with some of you, in many ways coming here to Elburn feels a bit like "coming home." My hometown of Batavia is just down the road; in fact, I have already met a number of fellow "Bulldogs" who have found their way into town before me. And it seems as if after every Mass I am meeting someone new who knew my aunt and uncle who used to live in town, or who are familiar with my parents, or one of my siblings, or even my grandparents of happy memory. But thank you, one and all, for making this transition so happy and peaceful for me. I am looking forward to our years together, and to helping one another grow in our love for Jesus Christ, our Catholic faith, and our neighbor!

Thank you, as well, for your patience with me as I try to get to know all of you. Having to wear masks makes that a bit more challenging than usual, as we can't see each other's faces...but we'll get there together! I also deeply appreciate how faithful you've been to wearing your mask to Mass and doing your best to observe the social-distancing the Diocese has asked us to practice. Let's continue to pray every day for an end to the pandemic, for healing for the sick, for protection for all First Responders and health-care professionals, and for effective medications to be found. In time we'll be free from all of these restrictions, praise God! In the meantime, I know that some folks are feeling particularly stressed, or anxious, or isolated by all that's been going on in our world these last months. With that in mind, I've shared a prayer with you here that I have found especially helpful in keeping my thoughts and emotions focused on what truly matters and on the joy we have in Christ. I pray that you will find it equally helpful for you and your loved ones. God bless you all, and please be assured of my prayers for you every day! St. Gall, pray for us!

In Christ,
Fr. Max