

WELCOMING FR. JOSEPH POGGEMEYER

The Twenty-third Pastor of Saint Wendelin Parish



Dear St. Wendelin Parishioners,

+JMJ

Greetings in Jesus Christ! Fr. Poggemeyer here, writing my first bulletin letter, a little over a week before my arrival in Fostoria. Perhaps you remember that I was in Fostoria for my pastoral year, halfway through seminary training. That was about 26 years ago. So perhaps also some of you remember my story from back then. But, here is a quick recap:

I was born in Quebec, Canada and placed into an orphanage run by religious sisters in old Quebec City. After about 2-1/2 years I was adopted through Catholic social services by Jack and Kit Poggemeyer. They lived just outside of Curtice, Ohio, which is where I spent my entire life, until I attended the University of Michigan. I obtained my undergraduate degree in applied linguistics, after which I worked for a small publishing company as production manager and purchaser. Then I got halfway through my MBA at Eastern Michigan University, before deciding to enter seminary. During my first semester at the University of Michigan, life had totally changed after I experienced God moving in my heart by the power of his Holy Spirit in an amazing way. I knew I had to live for him, no matter what that meant. Eventually, I realized I had to enter seminary. Every Catholic, of course, should be living for God in every area of life; but, the conviction grew in me that I was supposed to be a priest of Jesus Christ, to help people know God through the Sacraments especially. Most of my seminary training happened at the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio. I was ordained in 1997, and my first assignment was four years as Associate Pastor at St. Mary's Parish Sandusky, Ohio. Then I was asked to go to Rome to get a doctorate in Biblical Theology, so that I could return to the Josephinum to teach. After four years in Rome, I spent three years on faculty at the Josephinum. Then I returned to Toledo as pastor of St Joseph's Parish Downtown, and as director of religious formation at Central Catholic High School, as well as teaching several classes at there. After a couple years I was asked to become pastor of Saints Adalbert and Hedwig Parish, which was merged only weeks after I arrived. Finally, after four years with those two Downtown Toledo parishes, I was asked to move to Divine Mercy Parish of Paulding County. Now that my six year term at Divine Mercy is coming to an end, I have been asked to come to Fostoria Saint Wendelin's.

Although I will very much miss the people of Divine Mercy, I am eager to serve the community of Saint Wendelin. Each time I have been asked to take a different assignment, I have always trusted that the Lord was behind the request. And, if the Lord is behind the request, I can always be confident that He will bless everybody involved in the transition. He will bless the parishioners of Divine Mercy, who warmly received me six years ago, and now have graciously said goodbye. Likewise, the Lord will bless the community of Saint Wendelin's, as you try to serve Him in the transition to your third pastor in only a matter of months. Certainly this has not been easy: a call to heroic faith and love!

I pray that as I join your community, we can desire together the greater glory of God... which means we will try to respond to the mission of Divine Love to the best of our ability. Thank you for welcoming me! And, I beg your patience with me as I learn the life of Saint Wendelin Parish, and as we seek the Lord's vision for moving onward and upward, from one degree of glory to the next. Remember St. Paul to the Corinthians (2Cor 3:18)? "All of us, gazing with unveiled face on the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory...."

I look forward to being with you soon and serving the Lord with you!
In cordibus Iesu et Mariae (i.e., "In the Hearts of Jesus and Mary")
Father Poggemeyer