

28th August 2021

Dear Parishioners of Our Lady of Mercy and Our Lady of Fatima Parishes:

May the Lord grant you His peace!

Over 800 years ago, Jesus spoke to St. Francis from the crucifix of San Damiano in Assisi, Italy. Our Lord told the humble Poverello: *Go, build up my Church*. Ever since then, we Franciscan Friars have made it our mission to serve the local dioceses in their work of building Church – the community of the People of God and the houses in which they gather to worship. Our Franciscan charism of church-building is complemented by our spirituality of itinerancy. God keeps the friars moving on, doing their mission of church-building for local dioceses like Charlotte, and then continuing to the next missions where God wants the friars to upbuild church.

For the past 34 years, we friars of Our Lady of the Angels Province (formerly the Immaculate Conception Province) have had the privilege of living, working, and church-building with your community of believers at Our Lady of Mercy and Our Lady of Fatima. We are humbled that the Diocese of Charlotte entrusted to us your pastoral care for three and a half decades. Today we give thanks to God for all of you and for all of the deceased and former parishioners who preceded you. We have great confidence that the diocesan clergy of Charlotte will serve you better than we friars are presently capable of doing.

We shall be ever mindful of all the thousands upon thousands of parishioners for whom we have had the privilege of offering Holy Mass, celebrating baptisms, first communions, confirmations, weddings, and funerals at your parishes. We praise God for the generations of young believers educated in your school and religious education programs during our time in Winston-Salem. We shall treasure the memory of all the Sisters, catechists, choristers, liturgical assistants, staff and volunteers with whom we collaborated as one family. We even cherish the hope that someday in the future, your parish may even provide at least one new vocation to our religious Order.

Those who love God never say “goodbye” for the last time. Our bond of communion in the living Church remains strong as ever. May our good God hold all of you in the hollow of His hands – hands of mercy and love! May Our Lady of Mercy and Fatima wrap you in Her mantle.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. James McCurry, O.F.M. Conv.

Very Rev. James McCurry, OFM Conv.
Minister Provincial

