



February 21-22, 2009

My dear friends, the parishioners of Divine Savior Parish,

I have had the privilege of being your pastor for 21 years, and you have always shown me great kindness, love and support. We have worked together on many projects and have watched with satisfaction as our parish has grown. As your pastor, I have always wanted nothing but to serve you as the Lord asked me to, to help you grow closer to Him, and to administer the sacraments with devotion. In the past year, as I have undergone surgeries, infections, and complications from both, you have been ministers to me – by your prayers, your visits, your cards, the meals you have cooked, and your constant concern. It's hard to find words to thank you for all that you have done for me, but please know that I have experienced your love and care in a very powerful way. Thanks to the grace of God and wonderful medical care, my condition has improved and continues to improve.

Needless to say, through the months of illness I have had a lot of time to pray and consider what God is asking of me at this time in my life. I love being a priest, and taking care of God's people brings me joy and satisfaction. Recently Bishop Sartain and I began to discuss what my next step would be, and it was a relief to know that he and I are on the same wavelength. I wanted you to know before anyone else that I have come to the decision to retire, effective this summer.

Since many of you are retired or are approaching the age of retirement, you know that such a decision is bittersweet. I know that retirement will help complete my recuperation and sustain my health for a longer period of time, and it will open up many opportunities for relaxation, hobbies and travel, as well as time with my family. On the other hand, I will miss all of you, who through these twenty-one years have become my extended family in Christ.

The fact that I have come to this decision in February gives me time to get my house in order at a relaxed pace, to take the proper time to find the best place to live, and to have the opportunity to say a proper good-bye to all of you. My retirement will take effect in mid-June, and although Fr. Kevin Spiess will continue to serve as Administrator during that time, I will remain in residence as pastor here until we have arranged for my next home. The Bishop and his staff will help me find a good, comfortable place to live.

Thank you again for your kindness and love! As the actual time of my retirement approaches, we will have the chance to celebrate our blessings and offer one another a prayerful farewell.

Sincerely in Christ,

Rev. Robert E. Pietras, Pastor
Divine Savior Parish