

3rd Sunday of Easter - C
Acts 5:27-32, 40b-41;
Revelation 5:11-14;
John 21: 1-14

My Brothers and Sisters,

For the last several weeks, you have been asking who the next pastor will be. I am happy to announce that Archbishop Thompson has appointed Fr. Jude Meril as the next administrator of Little Flower Parish and Our Lady of Lourdes parish. For the last four years, Fr. Jude has served as administrator of St. Ann Parish in Indianapolis and St. Thomas More Parish in Mooresville.

Fr. Jude is one of three children. His younger brother and sister are married and have children.. His parents have been married for 39 years. Fr. Jude is on loan to the Archdiocese of Indianapolis from a diocese in India. He went to school at St. Meinrad for the last four years of his priestly formation. He was ordained on May 29, 2016. He served in two different parishes in his home diocese for two years each. In 2018 he returned to the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and served as associate pastor for three years at St. Christopher parish in Speedway under Fr. Paul Shikany.

When the priest personnel director called to tell me about Fr. Jude's appointment, the only thing I knew about him was that he had been Fr. Paul Shikany's associate at St. Christopher and that Fr. Paul spoke highly of him. The priest personnel director told me that he has done an excellent job as administrator of St. Ann and St. Thomas More. According to the priest personnel director, he is the most understandable of all the Indian priests serving in the Archdiocese at least partially because he studied at St. Meinrad for four years. I can attest that even though I am very hard of hearing, I have found him very easy to understand in my conversations with him the last couple of weeks.

The other night I talked to Fr. Shikany about him. He told me that he is wonderful. He was much loved at St. Christopher from the beginning. He is very hard working. He is also very sensitive and compassionate to the needs of people. He is very good with children, and children really like him.

The day after I heard that Fr. Jude was coming to Little Flower I happened to have lunch with a St. Christopher parishioner. She was talking about all the associate pastors St. Christopher has had since Fr. Paul became pastor, and she told me that Fr. Jude was her favorite.

As you already know, I will continue to live in the rectory for some time. Some new pastors would not want the former pastor around. Fr. Jude said he plans to ask for my help when needed and also to answer questions he might have. He has also invited me to remain visible to the parish and to the school. I am very grateful for this.

In my conversations with him, it is clear that he is not looking to come in here and make a lot of changes. He asks a lot of questions. He wants to learn about the parish and get to know you. For example, he has already watched at least one of our Masses online. He is also very sensitive to the fact that we are getting ready to celebrate our 100th anniversary.

Also, please rest assured that both Little Flower and Lourdes will continue to have Saturday evening and Sunday morning Masses although the times are not yet totally decided. Also, the Sunday evening 6 p.m. Mass will continue at least for the time being. During the week, he will be at each parish for two days. Each parish will have two weekday Masses each week, one of which will be an all-school Mass.

Unfortunately, in some instances some parishioners leave a parish or reduce their support of the parish when there is a change in leadership without giving the new pastor a chance.. I hope that does not happen here. Little Flower has been known as a very welcoming parish, a parish which supports its priests. I have certainly experienced this from day one. I hope you will be as welcoming and supportive of Fr. Jude as you were and are of me. Again, I am confident that Fr. Jude will be a wonderful pastor. In fact, I can say that I am excited about his appointment.

My brothers and sisters, Fr. Jude is coming to us from St. Ann. Although this probably means more to me than to you, when Fr. John Riedinger, Little Flower's longest-serving pastor, was assigned to Little Flower in 1942, he was pastor of St. Ann Parish. For me, this is a good omen.