

**As most of you are aware, Saint Theresa of Avila and Saint John Chrysostom Parishes here in West Roxbury have been linked as collaborative partners within the Archdiocese of Boston's Evangelization Plan, "Disciples in Mission", for a number of years. This past week, Father John Carroll at Saint John Chrysostom and Myself here at Saint T's were officially informed that our two neighboring parishes are going to move into active collaboration together effective as of September 1, 2020.**

**In addition, the Clergy Personnel Office of the Archdiocese also informed us that Cardinal Sean has granted Father Carroll Senior Priest/Retirement Status, and appointed me as Pastor of Saint John Chrysostom Parish, in addition to my assignment as Pastor of Saint Theresa of Avila Parish, also effective on September 1, 2020.**

**Over the next month, before the collaboration goes into effect officially, the pastoral staffs at both parishes will work together to determine how best to serve the faithful and carry out the ministries of both of our parishes in our new collaborative effort. No doubt, over the coming weeks, months and years, there will be other changes and transitions that will be announced and implemented. It is my desire, hope and intention to manage such developments in a reflective, respectful and sensitive manner for all involved. Constant, clear and effective communication will be an important and fundamental element of that effort.**

**Even more important and fundamental to our ongoing, cooperative efforts to work together, here in our neighborhoods in West Roxbury and beyond, will be to always keep at the forefront of our minds and hearts our shared identity and vocation as sons and daughters of God and sisters and brothers of Jesus Christ, Our Risen Lord, who are guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Who we are will be the key to developing a plan for what we do to carry out our shared mission and ministry in the months and years ahead.**

**As it develops and is available, please be sure that more detailed information will be shared with you. As parishioners, you will be consulted about our shared future and invited to provide not only your thoughts and ideas, but also your active involvement, assistance and support. While new and different, and therefore no doubt somewhat anxiety-provoking to some, I believe our cooperative and collaborative efforts together as two, neighboring Catholic**

parishes, will soon reveal themselves to be a grace-filled and exciting opportunity for all of us to pray, dream, plan and work together to fulfill our Baptismal commitments to carry out the mission and ministry entrusted to us by Jesus and to more authentically and effectively become true “Disciples in Mission”.

One final point of emphasis that I believe is important to share and about which I want to be crystal clear:

This beginning of active collaboration between our two parishes is in no way a prelude towards a merger or a closing of either parish or church building. Neither on the Archdiocesan level, or locally here in the two parishes, is there the expectation or belief that a merger or closing is going to be a part of our shared future. Indeed, fundamentally, this collaborative effort is a pro-active step to intentionally marshal our individual and collective resources to strengthen and grow the Catholic Community of West Roxbury in cooperation with our mutual neighbors at Holy Name Parish.

On a personal level, I consider myself humbled, blessed and excited to have been chosen by Cardinal Sean to help to bring this collaboration to fruition. I was privileged to have previously served as Administrator of Saint John Chrysostom Parish for a year and nine months from 2013-2015. As I share this announcement with you here at Saint Theresa of Avila, I have been similarly privileged to have served as your Pastor or Administrator for another period of a year and nine months. I simply refuse to consider that same length of service in both Parishes to merely be a coincidence. On the contrary, I recognize it as a sign from the Lord of His particular Blessing on our new, joint pastoral endeavor. It has truly been a joy for me to personally get to know and come to love the faithful of these two wonderful Parishes for exactly the same period of time. I look forward with hope and expectation to what abundant blessings our Good and Gracious Lord will shower upon us as we begin together in a month’s time our collaborative efforts to love and to serve God and His People. Be sure of my continued prayers for all of you, even as I humbly ask for an ongoing remembrance in your own.

Reverend John J. Connolly, Jr.

August 1, 2020