

A Note from Father Vincent



My Dear Parishioners and New Friends:

I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself. As some of you may know, I was appointed by Cardinal Tobin to become the Administrator here at Our Lady of Mercy effective September 1, 2020. I have heard so many wonderful things about Our Lady of Mercy and I am excited to be here with all of you.

New Jersey is my home. I am the third of four children born to Rose and Anthony D'Agostino. I was born in Newark in 1966 and grew up in Belleville. My beloved father, who passed away in 2015, was an educator with the Newark school system. My beloved mom, who passed away in 2008, was a stay-at-home mom and worked as a receptionist when my siblings and I were older. I graduated from Belleville High School in 1984. After high school, I attended Rutgers University in New Brunswick (Go RU!) and graduated in 1989 with a bachelor's degree in Political Science and Philosophy. After Rutgers, I attended New York Law School at night and graduated in 1993 with a Juris Doctorate.

After graduating from law school, I practiced bankruptcy law for 17 years at two Roseland-based law firms. Although I felt as though I had the calling to the priesthood since I was a young boy, I didn't have the courage to take that step. I didn't think that it was possible that God could be calling *me*! Yet, God was patient and persistent. In 2010, at the age of 44 and after discerning God's call, I left my law practice and entered the seminary. I spent six years at Immaculate Conception Seminary at Seton Hall and was ordained on May 28, 2016. I thank God every day for being present to me on this journey.

I spent the first year of my priesthood at Saint Theresa's Church in Kenilworth. I was then asked by Cardinal Tobin to move to Saint Elizabeth's in Wyckoff to join the new pastor there. During the three years that I served at St. Elizabeth's, I made many friends and learned a great deal. I welcome this new assignment as Administrator of your parish as an opportunity to get to know each of you and to use my experience to serve you.

I already feel very much at home here in Park Ridge. Father Patrick, Father Jae and I were in the seminary together, and Monsignor Turro was my next-door neighbor in the seminary. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Father Patrick, Father Bob, Monsignor Turro, Father Jae and Deacon Joseph, as well as all the wonderful staff of Our Lady of Mercy, for “holding down the fort” these last several months, especially during the pandemic.

I also know Michelle Powrie, our new school principal, and her children from my time at Saint Elizabeth’s. I am happy that Michelle and I are starting together here in Park Ridge. I also welcome Deacon Ed, our newly ordained permanent deacon, to Our Lady of Mercy and look forward to serving with him.

While I was in the seminary, a mentor once said to me that to be a successful priest you have to do two things – be there for your people at the worst times of their lives (being there in the happy times is easy) and make sure that they know that you love them. I promise you that I will do both of these things and hope to serve you for many years to come.

Let us pray for each other as we begin this new chapter of life together. I believe that God has a reason for our paths to have crossed at this moment in time. He is looking for us to be Christ-like examples of grace, humility, gratitude, and joy in our lives as Catholics.

I look forward to each day with you.

In Christ’s Peace,

F. Father Vincent