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January 21, 2017

An Open Letter to the People of St. Michael the Archangel Parish –

I start this letter with a heart full of gratitude for the many blessings that I have experienced and have received over these past 17 years. Thank you to each and every one of you – you are an amazing parish!

On December 8, 2016, I initiated a conversation with Bishop Thomas to ask his permission to retire as pastor of St. Michael the Archangel effective June 30, 2017. He was very supportive to me. I told him if it were not for my health issues (Parkinson's and two stents in my heart) I would apply for another 17 years and would want them to be at St. Michael's. And so, effective July 2017, I will officially be retired and step away from the office of pastor of this parish, and will become a senior status priest. A new pastor will be assigned effective July 2017. Bishop Thomas works with a priests' personnel board to help make these decisions. Over the next two or three months we should hear more.

More details depend on various other issues – some out of my control and some I haven't decided upon yet. I do plan to live in Findlay, and it is my hope to be helpful to St. Michael's in some capacity.

I realize that this has become a year of a lot of changes – some we did not expect (Felix). However, I have trusted in the Holy Spirit to get us this far, and we need to trust that He will guide us into the future. I have been praying about this decision throughout all of 2016, and have discussed this with two of my very close priest friends, my family, and a couple of mentors – they have all been supportive to me. I pray that you also will be understanding and supportive.

I love you; God bless!

Fr. Mike