



26 December 2021

Dear Parishioners,

RE: NEW PARISH PRIEST FOR ST THOMAS'S LEWISHAM AND ST PATRICK'S SUMMER HILL

I write to advise you all of my departure! Somewhat to my surprise, Archbishop Anthony has asked me to take up the parish of St Michael's Lane Cove and I am to do that on 1 February 2022. Fr Geoff Plant, the outgoing Parish Priest has reached the age of retirement and will be farewelled from Lane Cove on January 30, 2022. As you may know, Lane Cove parish is one of the larger parishes in Sydney, and so while I appreciate the confidence being shown in me, I will also admit to having a few jitters!

Although I am a little sad to be leaving St Thomas's and St Patrick's, I am very happy indeed to be able to tell you that the Archbishop has appointed Fr Gerard Woo Ling as Parish Administrator in my place. Like me, Gerard became a priest later in life after having worked in the corporate world for many years. Fr Gerard was ordained in 2017 and has been serving at St Mary's Cathedral as assistant priest since then.

My memories of Fr Gerard in seminary were of a friendly, optimistic man who was always smiling and often laughing, but Fr Gerard is also a soul of prayer, and he has a spiritual connection to St Thomas's Lewisham. It was while he was praying in adoration before the blessed sacrament at St Thomas's Lewisham that Fr Gerard decided (or he might say, agreed!) to become a priest. I therefore see the Lord's hand in this appointment and ask you all to warmly welcome Fr Gerard as your new pastor.

I am deeply grateful to so many wonderful parishioners and people that I have had the privilege of working with here at Lewisham and Summer Hill. I will be forever thankful for the many wonderful times that I have had here while ministering to all of you. I also need to acknowledge that there have been some real challenges as well! In particular, learning to juggle the needs of the two parishes! It has also been a real joy to see St Thomas's beautifully restored and the establishment and flourishing of Eileen O'Connor College. Meanwhile, it has been a joy to live in the beautiful community of Summer Hill. In particular, I am so grateful to have had such a wonderful working relationship with St Patrick's School and I will be forever grateful to Mrs Josephine Flynn, her executive and staff for making it such a joy to engage with the students at Summer Hill.

As I look forward to moving on to a new parish, I admit that the last couple of years have taken a bit of a toll and like many people have not had the chance to take a break for a couple of years. I will therefore ask for some forbearance from you in January as Fr Gerard isn't able to commence until February 1. I have arranged for Fr Julian Wellspring to say the Sunday masses for me on the weekends of January 8 / 9 and 15 / 16 and am cancelling the weekday masses for the first two weeks of January (3-7 and 10-14) so that I can get a bit of a breather before taking on my new challenge.

For the last two weeks of January, I will be quite busy in tying up loose ends, packing and moving, getting a crash course in all things St Michael's Lane Cove and passing on over 6 years of accumulated knowledge of these parishes to Fr Gerard. I plan to have farewell celebrations on the weekends of January 29 and 30 (COVID permitting!) where I hope to be able to say goodbye and thank you to my dear parishioners of Summer Hill and Lewisham.

Summer Hill and Lewisham have been happy times for me, even with many challenges. I will miss all of you and will certainly keep you in my prayers, as I hope that you will pray for me!

Yours in Christ Our Lord,

Fr Sam Lynch,
Parish Priest