



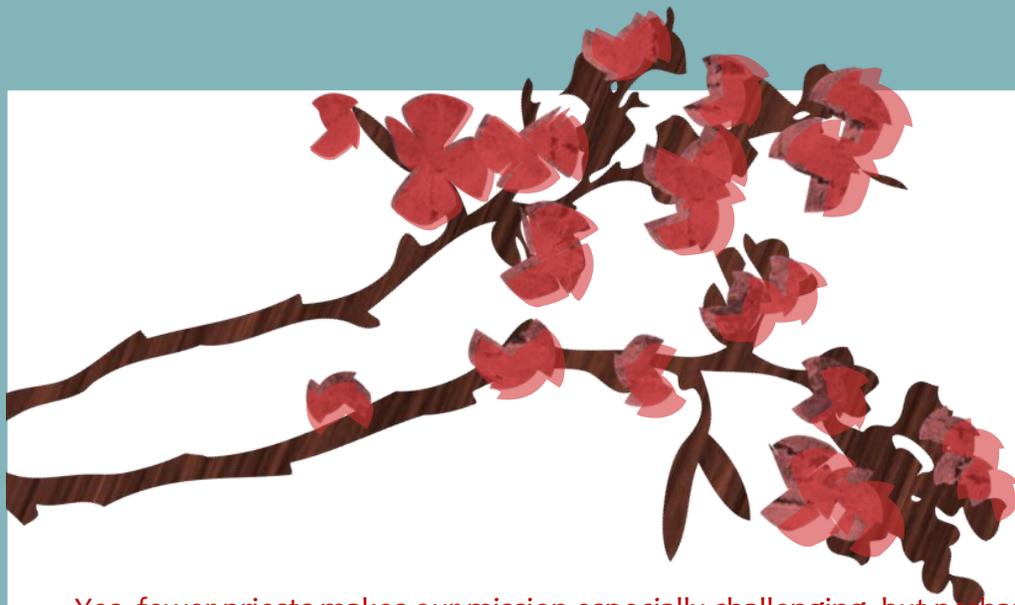
## “FROM THE DESK OF FATHER JONATHAN”



**AUGUST 16, 2015**

The Role of the Laity in Parish Life Last month we had the blessing of having Archbishop Ciliberti stay with us and serve in the parish. He is hoping to make this an annual event. Next year, God willing, he will come for the month of June. What an honor to have one of the successors of the apostles among us for such an extended period of time! One of the things that Archbishop Ciliberti and I discussed during his visit was how different things are today in the parish and neighborhood than they were forty years ago when he first visited our parish, but how the MISSION of the parish is the same: to preach and live the Gospel message. Forty years ago the rectory was filled with priests. There was a pastor and a half a dozen full-time associates, and a convent full of religious sisters. Today, there are only three of us priests, and we all have other responsibilities outside of the parish as well. Fr. Urbano teaches philosophy at two universities; Fr. Livinus is studying his doctorate at Fordham; and I do evangelization work in the media and for the Archdiocese.

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Yes, fewer priests makes our mission especially challenging, but perhaps it is also a blessing in disguise. It's a blessing because fewer priests is an invitation for the laity--for all of you--to become more involved in our mission. In the past perhaps we could have been tempted to allow the priests or sisters to run everything. Now, if we are going to grow the parish, reach out to the neighborhood, serve the poor, fortify our finances, work with our youth, take care of the sick and homebound, we need YOU. Forming, teaching, and organizing the laity to take on responsibility in every aspect of parish life is urgent, and I plan to make it a pastoral priority. How beautiful it would be if every parishioner would have a particular service or apostolate within the parish! That is a goal worth working for!

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