

Dear Parishioners: As many of you know, I caused some commotion this past week by marrying Sandra, my secretary, on Friday, July 2nd. Fr. Elder has graciously given me this opportunity for a very brief explanation which I feel is owed.

Sandra and I had been discussing the possibility of being married for nearly three years. Please know that these were just discussions. There was absolutely no physical intimacy. Zero! However, the question became--when should our marriage take place. And, celebrating this sacrament a scant two days after my retirement seemed very premature.

The reasons primarily revolved around age, health and the timeframe for laicization--which is the proper process for a priest to get married. Laicization involves removal from the clerical state, and the priest becoming, in effect, a "layperson". While the Church still regards him as a "priest", he is secularized and may not perform any priestly duties-- such as mass and confession, etc. The problem for Sandra and I was that this process may take up to 1 or 2 years. I am 75 with heart issues and Sandra is 72. We love each other and want to care for each other for the rest of the years that God gives us. The indefinite laicization period----coupled with the uncertainty of our health---mandated to us a very early marriage date and, we were offered an extraordinary location.

I loved being with you at Sacred Heart for these past 20 years! I am leaving you with two wonderful priests, Fr. Greg and Fr. Tyler, whom in many respects have talents and expertise that I do not possess. Our parish is very lucky to have them. The staff that supports them is extraordinary. Very probably one of the finest staffs in California! They combine years of experience with BIG knowledge and even BIGGER hearts.

So..... God bless all of you! And thank you for giving me the most wonderful 20 years of my life.