

'The Father John Years'

Pastor Father John gave his last Mass at 10:00 am Sunday. James Kirkpatrick stood before the congregation after Communion and shared these words:

This is the weekend that none of us has been looking forward to – but now it's here. This truly marks the end of an era – what I suspect will come to be known as 'The Father John Years.'

People come in and out of our lives all the time – and how they touch us can vary greatly. But every once in a while, our paths cross with someone who has a profound and lasting impact on our lives. Other than our own parents – it might be a very special teacher or coach, an exceptionally good friend – or perhaps, a good and holy Priest.

Everyone who was here

for Mass last weekend was treated to Father John's 'Bottom of the 9th recap' which so perfectly summarized the familiar themes of his homilies over the years. It was a reminder of just how blessed we have been to have had a Pastor who always kept 'his eye on the ball' ... A priest with a relentless devotion to the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist and who spoke the words of consecration at each Mass as if it were his first time: slowly, deliberately, with great reverence.

Did you come to take that for granted? I sometimes did, and I think it is what I will miss most.

There was his constant focus on our salvation; the ongoing reminder that we were created for one purpose ... to be with God forever in heaven ... and that getting

there is all that matters.

If you were to ask people what has been Father John's biggest contribution to our parish ... what's his legacy ... the initial answer would probably be that he's the priest responsible for building the new Catholic Church in Randolph. He was the one with the vision and the leadership that inspired a parish people of modest means to not only construct a new parish facility – but to then pass it on to his successor debt-free.

It took a man of his talents to bring that about – and future generations of Catholics will be the beneficiary.

Getting back to the 'legacy' - For the non-Catholic community in Randolph ... sure. They will site this building. And as impressive an

accomplishment that it is – for those of us blessed to have known him these 24 years there is so much more.

We all will look back and recall our own special memories. And we all have them. None of us can know – individually – what our future holds, but all of us can look back with appreciation and be grateful to God for having graced us with a man who has loved being a priest and has shared that love with us.

From all of us, Father John, thank you for everything you have done for us, for all that you have given us, for everything you have taught us – whether it was a white-board presentation or simply your good example.

We love you, we will miss you, and we pray that God will continue to bless and protect you always.