



DIOCESE OF METUCHEN

St. John Neumann Pastoral Center • P.O. Box 191, Metuchen, New Jersey 08840-0191
P: 732.562.2458 • F: 732.562.1427 • E: office.of.the.bishop@diometuchen.org

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

November 2, 2018

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I hope that this finds you well and I look forward to praying with you again in the near future; I always enjoy my time with the St. John Neumann community. Your devotion to the Lord is always uplifting to me.

I am sad to have to inform you that Father Abraham Orapankal will be leaving his ministry as pastor of your parish when he returns from his upcoming pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Father Abraham, being the good and holy priest that he is, has graciously agreed to my request that he take on an urgent position in our diocesan community. Father will be moving to become the parish administrator of St. Matthias Parish in Somerset – a parish that, much like yours, is so centered on Christ, but which is now going through a time of crisis. It is one of our largest and most active parishes. I believe that Father Abraham's spiritual strength and warmhearted and compassionate leadership are very critically needed for our sisters and brothers in Somerset.

I have heard during my several visits with you during these past two years how loved Father Abraham is within your parish family. I also know that he is to finish his term as pastor this spring, and was expecting to take on more responsibilities then. I am certain that our good Lord will count it as a very loving gesture that you are making for the good of the wider Christian community by sending Father Abraham forth with your prayers and blessings.

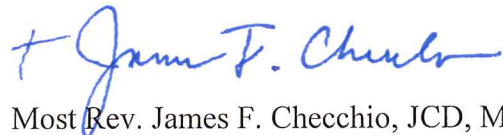
Of course, the spiritual well-being of your own parish community weighs very heavily on my heart, too, and so I have appointed Father Maurice Carlton to be your parish administrator for the next few months, at which time I plan to name a new pastor for you. Of course, the new pastor of St. John's will be appointed after considering your advice, that of my diocesan staff and taking the matter to our Lord in prayer.

Some of you surely already know Father Maurice, who just retired as pastor of St. Joseph Parish in High Bridge this past summer. Father knows your area well and was an effective pastor for the people of St. Joseph's. I am relying upon him to bring his pastoral expertise and spiritual fervor with which he so successfully led the people of St. Joseph's to your parish community as well. I am very grateful for his willingness to take up this important assignment in the life of your parish family and to bridge the gap until we can complete the process of finding you a new, good pastor. Likewise, I am grateful to you for warmly welcoming him as your temporary administrator while we begin the process of praying, listening and consulting to find a new pastor for St. John's.

I promise you a remembrance in my prayers, and humbly ask that you continue to lift me up to the Lord too. The strength and hope that we receive from our closeness to Jesus will surely not fail us in this time of need.

With renewed best wishes, I remain

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James F. Checchio". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Most Rev. James F. Checchio, JCD, MBA
Bishop of Metuchen