

St. Ambrose Parish

JULY 3, 2022
BEEHIVE

Circling Back

In a surprise announcement on May 23, Pope Francis appointed a longtime Vatican diplomat with ties to Michigan as an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Detroit.

Archbishop Paul Fitzpatrick Russell, 63, who until February was serving as apostolic nuncio to Turkey and Azerbaijan, and until the announcement as apostolic nuncio to Turkmenistan, will become the 31st auxiliary bishop in the Archdiocese of Detroit's history, the Holy See announced.

Because Archbishop Russell was given the title "archbishop" by Pope Francis upon his episcopal ordination and appointment as nuncio in 2016, he will retain that title while serving as auxiliary bishop to current Detroit Archbishop Allen Vigneron.

"We are deeply grateful to Pope Francis for appointing Archbishop Russell as auxiliary bishop for the Archdiocese of Detroit, and we are similarly grateful to Archbishop Russell for accepting this new ministry," Archbishop Vigneron said. "We are particularly glad to welcome Archbishop Russell home to Michigan, where he grew up and first heard the Lord call him to the priestly vocation. Having served the Church all over the world, Archbishop Russell brings to the Archdiocese of Detroit a valuable perspective of the universal Church and our mission to make joyful missionary disciples of all nations."

Although the timing of Archbishop Russell's appointment — and his background — are a surprise, it isn't totally unexpected, given that another of Detroit's auxiliary bishops, Bishop Donald Hanchon, will turn 75 years old in October, the age at which bishops are required by canon law to submit their resignations to the pope.

Archbishop Russell's appointment means Detroit will continue to have four active auxiliary bishops after Bishop Hanchon's retirement, along with current Auxiliary Bishops J. Arturo Cepeda, Gerard W. Battersby and Robert J. Fisher. Detroit also has two currently retired auxiliary bishops, Bishops Francis R. Reiss and Thomas J. Gumbleton, as well as retired Cardinal Adam J. Maida.

Like all auxiliary bishops, "my task is to assist Archbishop Vigneron as the chief shepherd of the Archdiocese of Detroit," Archbishop Russell said. "I'm open to serve however he'd like me to serve."



Archbishop Russell will begin his service to the Archdiocese of Detroit on July 7, when he will be welcomed to the Archdiocese during a 2 p.m. Liturgy of Welcome and Inauguration of Ministry at the Cathedral of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Roots in Michigan

While he's never served as a priest or bishop in Michigan, Archbishop Russell retains deep ties to the state.

Born May 2, 1959, in Greenfield, Mass., to the late Isabelle Fitzpatrick and Thaddeus Russell, Archbishop Russell spent the majority of his childhood in northern Michigan after moving to Alpena with his mother and sister when he was in third grade.

Although he returned to the Archdiocese of Boston to pursue the priesthood, being ordained June 20, 1987, Archbishop Russell said he's always considered the Great Lakes

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Circling Back

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State home.

Archbishop Russell said he is “thrilled” to be returning to his roots after spending the majority of his 35 years in ministry as a member of the Vatican’s diplomatic service, serving as a representative of the Holy See in apostolic nunciatures in Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Turkey, Switzerland and Nigeria, as well as leading the Vatican’s diplomatic mission in Taiwan.

In 2016, Pope Francis appointed him apostolic nuncio to Turkey and Turkmenistan — and later Azerbaijan — which carried with it his elevation to the rank of archbishop. On June 3, 2016, then-Msgr. Russell was consecrated a bishop in the Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Boston by Cardinal Sean O’Malley.

In fact, Archbishop Russell said, he’s known Detroit’s current archbishop for nearly 30 years, since the time when then-Fr. Vigneron was working in the Vatican’s Secretariat of State under then Msgr. (now Cardinal) James Harvey, and Fr. Russell was personal secretary to Boston’s cardinal archbishop.

The two first met in Boston, when Fr. Vigneron accompanied Msgr. Harvey during a visit to the Massachusetts archdiocese. “Actually, it was Fr. Vigneron who recommended me to Msgr. Harvey as a potential candidate for diplomatic service.”

As a seminarian, he worked at the Archdiocese of Detroit’s CYO camp in Port Sanilac, where he got to know two other future Detroit priests — including another future auxiliary bishop — Bishop Fisher and Fr. Zaorski, with whom he retains close friendships, he said. Archbishop Russell even served as co-consecrator at the episcopal ordination of Bishop Fisher and Bishop Battersby in 2017 at the Cathedral of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

“Those friendships have been really important to me over the years — not just Bishop Fisher and Fr. Zaorski, but other priests of Detroit with whom I’ve become friends,” Archbishop Russell said.

Detroit has always been close to Archbishop Russell’s heart — in a literal way, even. The pectoral cross he wears as a bishop originally belonged to a Detroit priest in the mid-1800s, a relative of a cousin’s wife.

“My cousin’s wife’s family name is Van Antwerp, and her father was the mayor of Detroit (in the late 1940s). She had a great uncle, Msgr. Francis J. Van Antwerp, who was vicar general of the Detroit diocese in the late 1800s,” Archbishop Russell said. “He was a special type of monsignor who was able to dress as a bishop, even though he wasn’t a bishop, and he wore the miter and pectoral cross. She gave me that cross, and I’ve always had it with me.”

At his own episcopal ordination in 2016, Archbishop Russell wore that pectoral cross — a special moment for him. “That’s why I say Detroit is always close to my heart,” he said. “That’s the story behind it.”

Holy examples

While he never met Msgr. Van Antwerp whose cross he wears, another Michigan priest relative had a sizeable impact on his vocation.

From an early age, Archbishop Russell had an inkling God was calling him to the priesthood, influenced in no small part by the example of his great-uncle, Fr. Robert Emmet Fitzpatrick, a priest first of the Diocese of Grand Rapids, then Saginaw, then Gaylord. When he was in first grade, Archbishop Russell recalls, his teacher asked his class to draw pictures of what they wanted to be when they grew up, and Russell drew a picture of his great-uncle. “I remember saying, ‘I want to be a priest,’ and the teacher in the public school was so shocked. She said, ‘Really? That’s so boring,’” Archbishop Russell said. “But I had that very strong idea from a young age and my ministry has been very far from boring.”

Upon moving to Michigan, he enrolled at the parish grade school of St. Bernard of Clairvaux Parish, where his great-great grandfather was one of the founding members in the late 1800s. After graduation from Alpena High School in 1977, he spent a year as an exchange student in France, where he studied under the tutelage of Fr. Michel Vadon, who “got me thinking about the big questions in life,” Archbishop Russell said.

Returning to the U.S., the feeling of priesthood came flooding back, and he decided to enter St. John’s Seminary in Boston, where his father’s family lived. That’s when his paternal grandmother gave him a photograph of her cousin, Fr. Michal Piaszczyński, a Polish priest who had been killed in the Nazi concentration camps during World War II.

His grandmother had escaped Poland after the First World War, “but she didn’t talk about it too much,” Archbishop Russell said. “She had some painful experiences in Poland.” In 1999, when Archbishop Russell learned Pope St. John Paul II would beatify Fr. Piaszczyński along with a number of other Polish martyrs, he was shocked. “I called the Congregation for the Causes of Saints (in Rome). I was in Ethiopia at the time, and I called them and they confirmed it,” Archbishop Russell said. He attended the June 13, 1999, beatification Mass in Warsaw with his sister and aunt.

Archbishop Russell said he was told his relative was chosen from among the martyrs to receive beatification based on testimony and evidence of his life in the camp, which included a story about his heroic act of generosity. “There’s a story that the prisoners were all starving, and no one had enough to eat. Each day, they got half of a piece of bread. My cousin gave his portion of bread to one of his Jewish fellow inmates,” Archbishop Russell said. “The Jewish man said to him, ‘I know you Christians believe God is present in the bread in your churches, but I believe God is present in this bread you’re giving me now.’”

“I was very moved by that story, and I always keep his photograph on my desk,” Archbishop Russell said. “In

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All Things Considered

I write this late in the evening after just arriving back at the rectory following a two day Family of Parishes orientation session conducted in Shelby Township. I am exhausted. Moreover, I am befuddled. After more than a year of reading and meeting about Family of Parishes, I thought I had something of a handle on it. Not any more.

There were fourteen presentations – and with rare exceptions – I had difficulty comprehending them. It was like listening to a foreign language mangled into English by Google Translate. I got the syntax, but a lot of the vocabulary was spoken in a jargon or dialect I didn't quite get. That's one of the fundamental problems I find with the Family of Parishes concept. It often traffics in corporate-speak while trying to maintain a religious sensibility.

Central to the problem is a vocation crisis which predicts that the number of priests working in our Archdiocese will go from 223 today to 145 by the year 2031. So "downsizing" is the order of the day. Many of the framers of FoP are on loan from the business world where downsizing is a well-practiced sport.

The other difficulty I have in comprehending the FoP language is because so much of it is borrowed from American Protestant-speak. While our Roman Catholic way of naming and organizing things might not be perfect, it was at least a system built around the simple concept of Pastor/Parish/Parishioner. The vocation crisis is taking out one of those elements (pastors) and I am afraid we don't have many good ideas to replace them – except resorting to business models to maintain the operation.

I am in a poor mood. After a night's sleep, I will process things better. But for now I'm going to keep my head low and try to do what I see is best for this parish – for as long as I can.



One year ago last weekend, a deluge of biblical proportions hit the east side. The waters flooded basements, totaled cars, and, among other things, destroyed the ARK and half our offices.

As if the pandemic was not enough of a setback for the parish, this event has mightily challenged the resources and tenacity of everyone connected with this community. We've been seriously working on this in order to see what we can do in the short term and long term to mitigate flooding like this in the future.

Here is the latest report from our Infrastructure Chairperson, Dr. Rory Bolger:


"As has been noted in the last six months of the Beehive, an ad hoc Infrastructure Committee has met and interviewed a variety of officials and experts to help determine the parish's next steps to insulate parish properties from a similar cataclysm. We are pleased to have just learned from the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department that they have cleaned and televised the north/south-running DWSD sewer under Alter Road, which should further help protect the school and former convent buildings.

A key objective is to make sure that none of the stormwater that might collect on parish properties ends up in the sanitary sewer system, which leads to the Jefferson Avenue Interceptor that

carries waste water all the way to the sewage treatment plan on West Jefferson in southwest Detroit. The interceptor backed up with last year's heavy rains when pumps failed downstream at the Freud and Conner Creek pumping stations.

We know from the Grosse Pointe Park Department of Public Works that the catch basins in the church parking lot drain into the storm sewer lines under Hampton; those storm lines lead to Patterson Park where the storm water can be discharged into the lake rather than to the Jefferson Interceptor.

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2	0	CSA
2	2	Box Scores
Number of Families 800		
Returns to date 52		
verage Gift in '21 \$771.00		
AoD Quota in '22 \$93,669		
Property/Liability Insurance ... \$52,000		
Adjusted parish target \$145,669		
Received as of 6/29/22 \$58,520		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our CSA goal is higher this year by only \$600, but it will be as challenging to meet as it was in 2021. • The insurance premium listed – roughly \$1,000 a week – is the fund that covers our property and liability coverage for the parish. • Once we meet the AoD quota, anything given to the CSA comes directly back to our parish without the usual 7% deduction. • Donations may be made in stock or other negotiables. 		
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To make your electronic donation even easier, please scan this QR Code with your smart phone camera and you will be taken directly to our parish website where you can make your donation. 		

All Things Considered

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What we don't yet know is where the rain in the church and rectory roof down spouts drains to. If it flows into the same lines as sanitary waste from sinks and toilets, then the chance of future back-ups continues. The same is true for the numerous small catch basins around the church and rectory grounds. Clogged up catch basins and downspouts mean that a dye test can't be run to confirm where storm runoff ends up. Plumbers and other contractors are so backed up with work, we haven't been able to nail down a date when we can get our lines snaked-out. Until that happens, key findings are on hold ... and we dearly hope big rains stay away.

Midst the frustration, promising developments continue. Grosse Pointe Park Mayor Michele Hodges and City Manager Nick Sizeland are committed to finding a date for a meeting involving Fr. Pelc, The Properties Department of the Archdiocese, GPP city officials, and Dr. Paul Schaap, developer of the forthcoming performing arts center adjacent to the parish properties. All parties are in the same boat when it comes to safeguarding existing and future assets from this changing climate.

With the assistance from Wayne County Commissioner Tim Killeen, the Infrastructure Committee succeeded in connecting with the Wayne County Department of Public Works engineering staff responsible for the Fox Creek Enclosure, which runs underground along the church's property lines before eventually being daylighted as the canal south of Jefferson alongside Alter Road to the Detroit River. A county representative will meet with the Committee at our next meeting on July 12th. Although we have developed a pretty good idea of how the two cities' sewer systems and the Great Lakes Water Authority relate to stormwater management, the underground Fox Creek Enclosure has been more of a mystery. We look forward to the County filling in that missing piece of the puzzle."

TRP

The Buzz

For almost 27 years, this is one of the weirdest moments I've had writing "The Buzz" at St. Ambrose. Ordinarily I'd be signing in this week by wishing everyone a Happy New Year . . . Church fiscal/program year that is! This is still true for the most part – since this past Friday, July 1st, did begin such a "new year" as would happen under normal circumstances. However, what's well outside the realm of normal is that as of two days ago St. Ambrose has begun the new year as a member of a new Family of Parishes.

What's weird for me is that I'm writing this before it takes effect. We are in Wave-2, or the second batch of parishes in the Archdiocese to implement this reorganization. Roughly half of the parishes did this last year. I'm writing this as Fr. Pelc is away at a several-day intense orientation and workshop for the priests of Wave-2 to hear about and work out details for its start-up (two days ago!). And although we have been preparing for this mentally and emotionally by not expecting much to change in our normal operations for some time into the future, we have also joked that none of us might be here for this weekend. I'm really not worried, and I look forward to Fr. Tim's return with all the salient details of how our new FoP will play out at St. Ambrose in the days ahead. It still feels weird.



Well, weird or not, once again: Happy New Year! Since it is a sort of a new beginning, why not take it as another opportunity to make some personal, spiritual New Year's resolutions. One "programming" resolution might be to take one additional new step in the practice of your faith. Add one time of prayer; add one time of worship, one time of reflection, one time of service . . . (If you try to do too many things – even ones that are great ideas – you'll probably get tired or discouraged too quickly and will wind up not doing any! Start with just one.)

One suggestion is to try out a weekday mass; we have one during a morning, one at a noon hour, and one in early evening. There's a different atmosphere at these than at a Sunday liturgy. Or you might consciously try to schedule in some reading or other form of learning more about your faith. A quick range of ideas here includes reading each day's scripture passages listed on page 6 of this bulletin . . . or you can find them online at uscgb.org in both audio as well as print formats. I also have recommended the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* which can be accessed at the same website: uscgb.org.

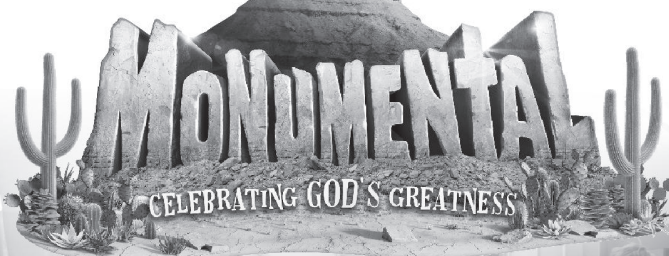
And don't forget about the other side of learning . . . teaching. In this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus sent the disciples out in pairs to try out their ministerial skills. They came back astounded at what they had accomplished. So don't short-change your own apostolic/teaching powers. Consider becoming a much-needed catechist or an assistant or a trainee in our rebuilding religious education program for 2022-2023. There's time for preparation and training before the new year of classes begins in September. Our kids need happy, faith-filled adults to catch on to our Catholic way. Call Kelly at 313-332-5633 to explore the possibilities. Ask her about how the Holy Spirit works in, with, and through her catechists. And then be careful about saying NO to the Holy Spirit!



A new program year is also a good time to invite everyone and anyone to the RCIA process at St. Ambrose . . . all those adults and older teens interested in exploring the Catholic Faith with a view to possibly joining or completing their sacramental initiation. Call me anytime at 313-822-2814 x2 for more information about this – without cost, obligation, or other strings attached.

Chuck Dropiewski

2022 Vacation Bible School



Mariana Hernandez-Andrzejczyk welcoming us to this years VBS!



Arts and crafts with Declan Laurencelle and Thomas DeGemmis



Siblings Janina and Roch Roy



Matilda McKenzie and Mariana Hernandez-Andrzejczyk helping out at the desk!

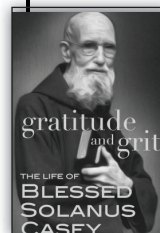


Andrew Woolums, Siobhan McGlone, Cassidy Woolums, Cecily Hartung and Salvatore Profeta - Our VBS assistants!



Lauren Carron serving up some lunch for the students!

Marcellina's Book Club



"Gratitude and Grit"

tells the startling story of a simple friar whose loving concern for everyday people dramatically transformed thousands of lives. A warm, straightforward account of Solanus Casey's life from someone who knew him personally, this book is a testament to the fact that God is present in even the most unlikely places.

This reissue of Meet Solanus Casey: Miracle Worker and Spiritual Counselor includes a new foreword from Edward Foley, OFM Cap, vice postulator for the cause of Solanus Casey's canonization.

"Gratitude and Grit" is now available to order in print, E-book and Audiobook formats wherever books are sold, including directly from Franciscan Media's online bookstore at shop.franciscanmedia.org.

The Beehive

is the parish weekly bulletin of the St. Ambrose Catholic Community Detroit/Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan

Priest In Solidum: Rev. Timothy R. Pelc

Pastoral Minister: Charles Dropiewski

Religious Education: Kelly Anne Woolums

Minister of Music:

Office Manager: Peggy O'Connor

Secretary: Mary Urbanski

Sacramental Celebrations

Masses: On the Lord's Day –

Saturday Vigil - 4:00 p.m.

Sunday - 8:30 & 11:15 a.m.

Baptism: Arrangements for both adults and infants to be made by contacting the rectory.

Penance: As announced and by appointment.

Marriage: Couples should contact the rectory office a minimum of six months in advance of the proposed date to make arrangements.

Funeral: Normally celebrated within one week after the deceased's passing.

Directory

Parish Office: 15020 Hampton

Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan 48230

Tel: (313) 822-2814 **Fax:** (313) 822-9838

Email address: stambrose@comcast.net

Religious Education: (313) 332-5633

Pastoral Ministry: (313) 332-5631

Ark Scheduling: (313) 822-2814

Parish Website: stambrosechurch.net

Liturgy Schedule

Monday, July 4

Weekday 14th week in Ordinary Time

Office closed – no services

Tuesday, July 5

Weekday 14th week in Ordinary Time

8:30 a.m. – Mass – Barbara Sharkey

Wednesday, July 6

St. Maria Goretti, virgin & martyr

Thursday, June 30

Weekday 14th week in Ordinary Time

7:00 p.m. – Mass – Felix Checki

Friday, July 8

Weekday 14th week in Ordinary Time

12:00 p.m. – Mass – Lawrence Convery

Saturday, July 9

St. Augustine Zhao Rong, priest

& Companions, martyrs

4:00 p.m. – Mass – For All People

Sunday, July 10

15th Sunday in Ordinary Time

8:30 – Mass – For All People

11:15 – Mass – For All People



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Scriptures for the 14th Week of Ordinary Time

July 4

Hos 2: 16, 17b-18, 21-22

Ps 145: 2-9

Mt 9: 16-26

July 5

Hos 8: 4-7, 11-13

Ps 115: 3-6, 7ab-8, 9-10

Mt 9: 32-38

July 6

Hos 10: 1-3, 7-8, 12

Ps 105: 2-7,

Mt 10: 1-7

July 7

Hos 11: 1-4, 8c-9

Ps 80: 2ac, 3b, 15-16

Mt 10: 7-15

July 8

Hos 14: 2-10

Ps 51: 3-4, 8-9, 12-14, 17

Mt 10: 16-23

July 9

Is 6: 1-8

Ps 93: 1-2, 5

Mt 10: 24-33

July 10

Dt 30: 10-14

Ps 69: 14, 17, 30-31, 33-34, 36, 37

or Ps 19: 8-11

Col 1: 15-20

Lk 10: 25-37

15th Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 9th - 10th

Saturday Mass at 4:00 p.m.

Sunday Masses are celebrated at 8:30 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.

Under the Center for Disease Control guidance, people in counties with low or medium Covid-19 community levels no longer need to wear masks indoors unless they are immunocompromised or at "high risk" for severe Covid-19. Currently Wayne County shows a **HIGH level of risk**. As a result, St. Ambrose Parish is reinstating the mandatory mask requirement for weekend masses. We will maintain it also for funerals and weddings.

At all community levels, the CDC recommends people get vaccinated and boosted, and get tested if they have symptoms.

To participate electronically, go to: facebook.com/stambroseparish or better yet, to You Tube at www.youtube.com/channel/UCbymBGIQxUF6UqPct5xFg

Your Envelope Speaks ... the Inside Story

To operate, each week our parish requires a *minimum* of..... \$10,100.00

On Sunday, June 26, 2022

in envelopes we received \$3,675.00

in the loose collection \$3,174.00

in electronic donations..... \$3,894.79

for a total of \$10,743.79

Over budget for the week..... \$643.79

Number of envelopes mailed 627

Number of envelopes used 45



Join us on YouTube

www.youtube.com/channel/UCbymBGIQxUF6UqPct5xFg

Our Sick

Please pray for those who are seriously ill or who are hospitalized: Pat Blake, Donald Miriani, Bonnie McKenna, Matthew Elias, Mary Martin, George Bucec, Emilie Kasper, Anna Noto Billings, Eileen O'Brien, Liz Linne, Donna Barnes, Alexandra Cullen, Charmaine Kaptur, Frank Gregory, Alex Billiu, Jackie Walkowski, Maria Simcina, Brian Tague, Sharif Hannan, Shirley Whelan, Anne Purvis, Jerry Gutowski, Kevin O'Connor, Albina Checki, Judy Sivanov, Matthew Brown, Ernie Ament, Vince LoCicero, Lily Faith, Patty Freund, Karen Jordan, Janis Ramsey, Colette Gilewicz, Richard Strowger and those suffering and hospitalized worldwide with Covid.



Diaconate Information Night

In 1968 our American bishops asked Pope Paul IV to authorize the restoration of the Permanent Diaconate in this country.

To understand diaconal ministry it is essential to see deacons in the context of the three general areas of service to which they are especially called: the ministry of the Word, ministry of the liturgy, and ministry of charity and justice. Everything a deacon does falls within this framework.

If you know of any men who have shown interest in the diaconate or you feel may have a call, consider inviting them to our next Diaconate Vocation Awareness Night on Wednesday, July 13th from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., at Sacred Heart Major Seminary. Additional details at <https://tinyurl.com/48k7wamy>

Deacon Chris Beltowski

Circling Back

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the face of a difficult, inhuman, unspeakably evil situation, my cousin not only kept his humanity and faith, but even increased them. His example means a lot to me.”

A global perspective

While he did spend a year living and studying Spanish in Bolivia as a seminarian, traveling the world as a diplomat wasn’t always in Archbishop Russell’s plans. When he was ordained in 1987, he expected his priesthood would carry on like most young priests: settling down in a parish.

It started out that way. His first assignment was at Sacred Heart Parish in West Lynn, Mass., an inner-city parish where he had relatives. After serving there for five years, he was transferred to St. Eulalia Parish in Winchester. His second assignment didn’t last nearly as long — only three days. Cardinal Bernard Law, archbishop of Boston, asked Fr. Russell to be his secretary. “I was really shocked,” Archbishop Russell said. “Working for the cardinal was the furthest thing from my mind.”

It was during this time that Fr. Russell met then-Fr. Vigneron, who had the idea that Fr. Russell could serve as one of the Holy See’s diplomats. “God surprised me again,” Archbishop Russell said of being asked to enter the diplomatic service. “But the cardinal told me to think about it, pray about it, and it took me about a month to discern. But I’ve always thought, if the bishop asks me as a priest to do something, we make a promise of obedience. So I wanted to be open to it and give it a try.”

In 1993, he was sent to Rome to study at the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy, which trains Vatican diplomats. While there, he earned a licentiate in canon law, and two years later a doctorate in canon law from the Pontifical Gregorian University.

After graduating in 1997, he began working in the diplomatic service under Msgr. Harvey, who was then assessor to the Secretariat of State. Six months later, he received his first assignment outside of Rome, in the apostolic nunciature to Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti in Ethiopia. In 2000, he was transferred to the apostolic nunciature in Turkey and Turkmenistan, and two years after that, to the nunciature in Switzerland and Liechtenstein. In 2005, he was sent to Nigeria.

“The Holy See’s diplomats are true diplomats, with a focus on peace and human rights, especially religious freedom,” Archbishop Russell said. “But the majority of the work is for the Church — to protect the rights of the Church. One of the most important tasks is the vetting process for the nomination of new bishops.”

In 2008, Pope Benedict XVI asked him to take on the role of Chargé d’Affaires in Taiwan — a unique role, given the Vatican’s complicated relationship with China and the self-governing island. “I was able to work with the government of Taiwan to have priests and sisters from mainland China come to Taiwan to study.”

After eight years in Taiwan, the pope called again — Pope Francis, this time. He was going back to Turkey, but this time as apostolic nuncio. As a new nuncio — and a new bishop — Archbishop Russell’s charge was twofold: to manage the Holy See’s diplomatic relations with the country, as well as care for the Christian community there, including about 30,000 Chaldean refugees fleeing violence in Iraq and Syria. In 2018, the pope added Azerbaijan to Archbishop Russell’s responsibilities.

Among his work there, Archbishop Russell assisted with the placement of refugee families in countries such as Canada, France and Italy, including humanitarian aid.

Back to the beginning again

With his diplomatic service coming to a close, Archbishop Russell might finally be getting that diocesan life he thought he’d signed up for as a seminarian. But a part of him will always miss it.

“The Holy See has always just sent me where they needed me,” Archbishop Russell said. “It’s been a very beautiful experience. It hasn’t always been easy, being so far from home and family, but I will miss it. At the same time, direct pastoral ministry has always been my first love.”

On his return to Michigan to serve as an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Detroit, Archbishop Russell said he’s learned to approach God with “open arms,” ready to receive whatever the Lord has in store for his life.

“Human beings are very similar, but we’re not all the same,” Archbishop Russell said. “Throughout my ministry, I’ve been able to see the beauty of all these different cultures, and the beauty of the Church in all these different places. It’s been a very enriching experience.”

Just like the globe he’s traversed, Archbishop Russell said it’s nice to see his life come full circle — back to the beginning, but in a new way. “I’ve found it to be true in my life that I’ve constantly returned to places where I have been before,” Archbishop Russell said, “but both that place and me and the people are different. This isn’t the first time I’ve worked for the Archdiocese of Detroit. When I was 19-22 years old, I worked during summers for the Archdiocese of Detroit at its CYO camp. And now I get to serve the people of Detroit again.”

He’s looking forward to doing just that — and he can’t wait to see the next chapter God writes for his life, he said. “Over the years, I’ve learned to stand before God with open hands, trusting in God’s love and care and providence,” Archbishop Russell said. “God loves us, and He cares about us, and He takes care of us in the best way — better than we could take care of ourselves. I’ve learned to just abandon myself to divine providence, and let Him do what He wants.”

*By Michael Stechschulte for the Detroit Catholic,
May 23, 2022. For more please visit detroitcatholic.com/*

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Registration details at choironevoice.org | Cost \$90 (Payable Via Paypal)

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