

December 30, 2009

Dear Parishioners,

I would like to thank you so much for the beautiful Farewell Party that you organized last Sunday. I always wanted something extraordinary, and I got it! I had the big snow the previous weekend and the Party had to be postponed twice... so there you go, now everybody will remember Fr. Gellert's Farewell...

Seriously, thank you to everyone for the love and support that you showed especially in these last days/weeks, but also during all these years. Many of you wrote cards and gave me gifts, then everybody started to bring food (I gained an extra ring of belt on my belly ☺). At the beginning I really had the intention to write a thank you note to each of you to express personally my appreciation and gratitude. However on Sunday night, when I have received the gift-box filled with more cards, I just gave up on it. With packing and cleaning my office and my room AND preparing/celebrating Christmas (all of these at the same time) I just can't do it. I feel sorry about it, because I have received so many nice words of appreciation from you, which made me wonder whether the card was really addressed to me... I am so amazed to learn that many lives are touched by our ministry and words. I have received cards from people with deep sincere thoughts I would have never imagined... So thank you so very much.

Reading your cards/letters also gave me some good time - everybody has their own personality and I love the many different ways they were expressed. To share a few: one reminded me who she was by reminding me that I was eating cotton candy at Vacation Bible School with her granddaughter upon my arrival... (This is very thoughtful, like this I really know who she is, and the memory remains...) Another wrote "coordinates" after her name, telling me in which row and which chair she always sit during weekday Masses... (I don't think about it, but it's true, I mostly know faces and I wouldn't necessarily know you by name...) Others reminded me that they will be missing how I was looking for an English word in the middle of my homilies... (I tell you it is a "great feeling" to go blank with a foreign language in front of a full Church. It is a REAL humiliation... maybe I needed it...)

So thank you for everything. I might not be able to write to each of you personally, please understand it, but know that I am going to pray for each and every one of you. I know that St. John Neumann is a great Parish, you made my service here delightful and easy with your welcoming spirit. Remember what Fr. Peter wrote in a previous Parish Bulletin. I loved it because it perfectly applies to this situation: *"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growths. (I Cor. 3:6-7)."*

I know you will welcome my successor with the same openness and friendliness. And pray for me that I can be a good instrument of the Lord in my new mission. I am going to pray for you.

In Christ,
Fr. Gellert

P.S.

My e-mail address: ailergel@gmail.com.

Home Address: Rev. Gellert Ailer

Kelenfoldi Utca 21

Budapest, Hungary 1115