



NATIVITY OF OUR LORD  
CATHOLIC CHURCH

Saturday, December 7, 2024

Dear Parish and School Community,

I would like to share some important news with you that impacts our Nativity of Our Lord Community. Through prayerful discernment, the Lord revealed to our Director of Discipleship, Mahalia Marcelin, that he has new plans for her, and she has decided to resign from her role here at Nativity, effective December 31.

This is a great loss for our entire community. I am personally grieved by the departure of such a fine employee. Mahalia was called to Nativity three and a half years ago to help us grow in our prayer lives and to spread the Gospel. She lives out her own personal mission: to evangelize and to make Jesus known and loved — in a most authentic manner. She has helped Nativity fully live out its mission to serve, pray, and love.

Mahalia has a beautiful joy that emanates from her. Many parishioners have shared how wonderful it is that when she speaks to you, she *sees you* and is *fully present to you* so that you feel like you are the only person in the room. She brings her abundant charisms into the work she does very genuinely.

The Lord has used Mahalia in marvelous ways: she is a woman of intense prayer, deep spiritual knowledge, and deep compassion for the sick and vulnerable. It will clearly be a challenge to fill the void left in her absence, but we support her decision to respond to the call of Christ as she discerns how best to live out her calling in service of God and others.

As we move through our journey of Advent, as disciples of Christ, we will discern with the help of the Holy Spirit, how to continue to support all of our ministries in the days and weeks ahead.

Any questions regarding Faith Formation or OCIA can continue to be referred to Taylor Croissant, while small group and youth ministry questions can continue to be referred to Emily Meyer. I am continually impressed with the outstanding job Taylor and Emily are doing here and I thank God for them. Any other questions can be directed temporarily to Fr. John Paul Erickson.

May almighty God bless Mahalia, and we wish that God continues to bless her heart with his love.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Rolf Tollefson  
Pastor of Nativity of Our Lord

Dear Friends in Christ,

*“This apparition (Jesus revealing his Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque) then invites us to grow in our encounter with Christ, putting our trust completely in his love until we attain full and definitive union with him.” — Encyclical Letter of the Holy Father Francis on the Human and Divine Love of the Heart of Jesus Christ*

This quote — and I highly recommend the entire letter — reminded me of why I moved from Florida to Minnesota three and a half years ago. Putting my trust “completely in his love,” I followed Christ to Nativity of Our Lord in Saint Paul. The Lord had called me to Nativity to bring his vision for our Discipleship ministries to life.

With Fr. Rolf, and Fr. Patrick before him, our goal was to grow the Faith Formation programs, start and sustain Youth Ministry, implement the Synod Small Groups, and launch our Hospitality program. We wanted everyone — new and current parishioners, visitors, Catholics, and non-Catholics alike — to experience the love of Christ in all that we offer: our liturgies, ministries, programs, events, and in each other. And by the grace of God, we are doing it!

While I would love to continue this journey with you, recently through prayerful discernment, the Lord has shown me he has new plans. His will is taking me to explore new and uncharted endeavors. So I answered, *Fiat!* I will resign from my current employment at Nativity at the end of this month.

With a sorrowful yet joyful heart, I reflected on my time here, and I am amazed at what God has accomplished through my humble *Fiat* at Nativity. Nativity has uniquely impacted my faith journey, either through friendships or our work in the mission of Christ. And for this, I am deeply grateful to God for each of you! I appreciate you welcoming me with such warmth and love.

As we part ways, please pray for me as I attempt again to make Mary’s *Fiat* my own! “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38). I believe that my efforts, those of my colleagues, and yours have enriched our community and ministries and positioned them for abundant growth and fruitfulness. So, putting my trust “completely in his love” and providence, I will go wherever God is leading me, but I leave you with this blessing:

*“I give thanks to my God at every remembrance of you, praying always with joy in my every prayer for all of you, because of your partnership for the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus. It is right that I should think this way about all of you, because I hold you in my heart, you who are all partners with me in grace...”*

— *Philippians 1:3-7*

Your servant in Christ,

Mahalia Marcelin  
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*“Faith never knows where it is being led, but it loves and knows the One who is leading.” — Oswald Chambers*