

Dear beloved parishioners of Good Shepherd and San Isidro,

I wish to greet you, everyone very personally in the name Jesus Christ. This message is just to introduced myself and keep in touch (connected) with you all.

I am Fr. Arul (Arulanantham) Yagappan, your new pastor belonging to Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales (M.S.F.S). I hail from India and as a priest, I had served many parishes in India and St. Lucia (Caribbean Island) and the Diocese of St. Augustine, Florida for the last 8 years. The year 2021-2022 is the special year for me as I celebrate my 25th (Silver Jubilee) of my priestly ordination and to be with you and serve you all the people of God.

Last May 2021, my religious superior asked me to go to Good Shepherd Church, NC reminding me the scripture:

“Jesus appeared to the eleven disciples as they were eating. He scolded them, because they did not have faith and because they were too stubborn to believe those who had seen him alive. He said to them, “Go throughout the whole world and preach the gospel to all people. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned. Believers will be given the power to perform miracles: they will drive out demons in my name; they will speak in strange tongues; if they pick up snakes or drink any poison, they will not be harmed; they will place their hands on sick people, and these will get well.” MK.16: 14-18.

Like the disciples I was a little bit reluctant but then my superior said, the people in Hope Mills are very good and around are in need of my service. Therefore, with his guidance I am here to walk with you and serve you all in your spiritual and social needs.

On June 29, 2021 when I celebrated Mass, I was so impressed of parishioners’ attendance and faithfulness. As the town is known as Hope Mills, I am hoping that I am going to have a very good spiritual journey with you all in faith and priestly ministry.

2020- 2021 year is a strange and awful situation with COVID19. We all may wonder and be shaken in our faith. But let us remember Jesus rose from the dead because he died on the cross. If He did not die on the cross, then there was no resurrection. In other words, it is Jesus’ assurance that every suffering will turn into joy and glory in heaven. God refines us in our suffering and graciously explains why: “See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this” (Isaiah 48:10). For emphasis, God repeats this reason.

How often have you heard people say, “I grew closest to God when my life was free from pain and suffering?” Mountain climbers could save time and energy if they reached the summit in a helicopter, but their ultimate purpose is conquest, not efficiency. Sure, they want to reach a goal, but they want to do so the hard way by testing their character and resolve. Only in cultivating discipline, endurance, and patience do we find satisfaction and reward.

Therefore, the staff and I sincerely hold you up for your strong faith, love and generous support and pray that Almighty God may reward you in all times for your love for God, His people and His Church.

And we pray earnestly that you all stay safe and healthy and pray that this pandemic situation may end soon and we all come to worship the One True God, Jesus Christ as one community of believers. Let us also know if we can reach out and help you in any way particularly in your spiritual and emotional needs.

Peace be with you.
God bless you and your family.
Stay safe and healthy.

Fr. Arul Yagappan, MSFS
Pastor