

# ST. JOAN OF ARC PARISH

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Franciscan Friars of the Atonement  
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March 15, 2025

**Dear Fr. Emil Tomaskovic, SA,  
Dear Franciscan Friars of the Atonement Council,**

I hope this message finds you and the Franciscan community at Graymoor well. With deep regret, we received your March 10 letter regarding the Franciscan Friars' departure from St. Joan of Arc Parish on June 30, 2025. We are profoundly grateful for your 27 years of dedicated service and write to request a one-year extension of your ministry to ease this transition for our parish community.

Your departure has brought sadness and concern, as the Franciscans have been an integral part of our spiritual life for nearly three decades. The transition will be a significant change for our parishioners. Therefore, we ask you for additional time that will allow for better preparation and support.

## **Our Concerns:**

- **Parish Reorganization & Finances:** Like many communities, we are still recovering from pandemic-related financial challenges and are implementing cost-saving measures. A leadership change on short notice could add further strain and make it more challenging to stabilize our operations.
- **Pastoral Plan Implementation:** Over the past year, we have worked with parishioners and our Pastoral Council to establish a three-year plan focused on growth, renewal, and youth programming. The continuity of Franciscan leadership for another year would provide stability as we implement these initiatives.
- **Community Impact:** The Friars' presence has fostered deep spiritual relationships that cannot be replaced overnight. Parishioners will need time to adjust, grieve, and find new ways to remain engaged in their faith.

We fully understand that the Franciscan Friars must make mission-based decisions, and we respect the challenges you face. At the same time, we hope you will consider our request for an extension as a way to ease this transition and allow for the best possible future for our parish.

You recently said that Servant of God, Fr. Paul Wattson, asked people to go out of their way to help support those in need. Here we are, asking for the same grace for our parish and its faithful.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further at your convenience. Please know that our thoughts and prayers are with you and the entire Franciscan community as you navigate this transition.

With gratitude and prayers,

**St. Joan of Arc Parish Community**