

July 7, 2019

Dear Cathedral Parishioners,

On June 10, 2006, my family sat in the left transept of this cathedral church as I was ordained a priest a few feet away. It is therefore a special place for me, as it is for all priests ordained here. It is an honor for me to now serve as the rector of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart. I would like to express my gratitude to the outgoing rector, Monsignor Patrick Golden, for his ministry in the parish, and for his kindnesses to me during the transition period.

The word “cathedral” is derived from the bishop’s “chair” (Greek: *kathedra*), which signifies his role of shepherding and teaching the whole diocese. Because it is the bishop’s church, and he is the chief shepherd, the cathedral is, in a sense, everyone’s church. Furthermore, this magnificent and historic edifice symbolizes the living Church that gathers within its hallowed walls: bishop, priests, deacons, and lay persons, who together form the Body of Christ.

As I begin my ministry as rector, I would like to tell you about myself. I am forty-three years old and have been a priest for fourteen years. I have an older brother and a twin brother, both of whom are married, and who live in Chapel Hill, North Carolina and Nashville, Tennessee respectively. I have a niece and a nephew. My parents live outside Orlando, Florida. My last name, Marques, which is Portuguese, is pronounced MARKS. My family lived overseas for most of my time growing up: in Lisbon, Portugal; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; and Lima, Peru.

I graduated from the College of William and Mary with a degree in government (1998). Upon graduation, I worked as a missionary in the Dominican Republic (1998–1999), and then as a legislative aid in the US House of Representatives (1999–2000).

I attended the seminary at Theological College of the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC (2000–2006). My assignments as a priest have been at Blessed Sacrament parish and James Madison University, Harrisonburg (2006–2008); St. Timothy’s, Tappahannock (2008–2011); Sacred Heart, Danville (2011–2014); and St. Benedict’s, Richmond (2014–2019).

When it comes to recreation and hobbies, I like being outdoors (hiking especially), running, and reading (mostly history). I enjoy a strong cup of coffee and am a devoted Bruce Springsteen fan.

The title of this cathedral is significant. The Sacred Heart is a beautiful expression of the person of Jesus Christ and his saving work: that he reveals the love of God by dying for our sins and rising from the dead. This Heart of God—the Sacred Heart of Jesus—embraces all people. I seek to reflect that divine love in my ministry here at the cathedral.

I look forward to meeting you in person in the coming weeks. In the meantime, so that you have it, my email address is tmarques@richmonddiocese.org. I kindly ask for a place in your daily prayers.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Tony Marques