

## Holy Cross Parish in Mt. Airy

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September 21, 2024

Dear Archbishop Nelson Perez,

As we navigate the sudden loss of our dear pastor, Rev. William Grogan, we, the congregation of Holy Cross Parish in Mt. Airy, wish to share our hopes for our community as we see them. **Thank you for considering our perspective during this time of mourning and transition.**

Over the past nine years, **Father Rayford Emmons** has provided our community unwavering counsel, spiritual direction and sacramental support; serving us tirelessly with a joyful heart that radiates his love for Jesus in action and example. He has brought a spiritual vigor and joy to our community through his thoughtful homilies, spiritual devotions, and outreach to the community. **As Parochial Vicar, he inspires us to be better, to walk closer with Christ and to build relationship with our Blessed Virgin Mother.**

**We strongly recommend and appeal to you that Father Rayford Emmons remain at Holy Cross Parish for the next year or two to assist with the transition and to provide the continuity the congregation needs** at this time.

We are blessed to be a parish of 'doers.' Ministries are vibrant and constantly innovating to better meet the needs of our congregation and the community at large. However, **we need a leader who has the energy and expertise** to draw in those who have fallen away from the church, and young adults and youth who have yet to find a parish home. We need a leader to develop a religious program that excites and nourishes the flock from sacramental preparation to missionary discipleship, and who has the vision to help position our parish as the relevant epicenter of spiritual nourishment and community support it is intended to be. The leader should have the financial prowess to establish stability and growth. **Father Emmons is talented in many ways and has a depth of knowledge across all these areas; however, he cannot do it alone.**

Therefore, **we recommend that in addition to keeping Father Emmons at Holy Cross, you also provide him with support to help with pastoral duties as well as operational administrative tasks.** Although he is in his second year of retirement age, we believe Father Emmons has the energy, vigor and desire to continue to serve our parish community effectively the next year or two of transition, if provided with the appropriate support.

Respectfully,

### **The Voices of Holy Cross**

*(The Voices of Holy Cross' was formed as a synod-based and Christ-centered forum for parishioners to share their ideas, suggestions and perspectives on our beloved parish's future, after the sudden death of our dear Pastor, Father Bill Grogan on August 25, 2024. Listening, processing, planning and healing together.)*

This Letter of Recommendation is submitted and supported by those whose names appear below: