

**Then let all the trees of the forest rejoice before the LORD who comes,  
who comes to govern the earth,  
To govern the world with justice and the peoples with faithfulness.**

Psalm 96:12b-13

### **A Testament to God the Father's love**

As you noticed, early in October I suddenly disappeared from St. Elizabeth Ann. Father Frank offered the excuse that I had decided to take a few days off following his return from vacation. That was only partly true.

In fact, on Saturday, Oct. 6, I received a call from the Vicar of Priests informing me that an allegation had been made against me. My response was "You have just turned my world upside down." I have since likened the consequences to – all at once – having my professional "license-to-practice" withdrawn, receiving an eviction notice, and being given a separation or a divorce – from you, the people of St. Elizabeth Ann.

The next few weeks were painfully difficult. I was overwhelmed with shame, sadness, and anxiety. I turned to my family who offered me a safe refuge and a lot of "hand-holding." I spent much time in prayer – and reading, recognizing that I hadn't had time to read for pleasure for some time. But thanks be to God, through prayer, I soon came to see the loving hand of God in my troubles. I came to realize that God is a loving Father, a Father that loves me enough to chasten me. Thus, I began to offer each day's suffering for three purposes: First, for the purification of my heart; second, in reparation for my sins and the sins of the world; and third, for healing of anyone hurt by my actions or those of others. Thus this has been a time of grace and **I thank God for loving me as a son.**

I greatly enjoyed my three-plus years at Elizabeth Ann. I am grateful to Father Frank for inviting me to do what I have loved most – celebrate Mass and hear confessions. And I am grateful to you who welcomed me, who expressed your appreciation for my gifts and talents, and were so generous in many ways. I am sorry to leave, but it is time for me to step away from active ministry and move to a life of prayer and penance.

I am currently living in Elkhorn as I wait for an apartment to become available at St. John Vianney Residence (for retired priests). My e-mail address is [dublin\\_spring.2006@yahoo.com](mailto:dublin_spring.2006@yahoo.com). My address – at least through February – is: 19217 Costanzo Plaza, 1B, Elkhorn, NE 68022-1556.

**I wish you the eyes to see God who is always with us!  
Christmas Blessings and a Blessed New Year.**

*Fr Don Cleary*