

Bishop Lucia has announced the appointment of Rev Robert C. Weber, Jr, as the PASTOR of St. Mary's Church in Clinton and as the "Sacramental Minister" of St Patrick - St. Anthony in Chadwicks, to be effective on Friday, July 1, 2022 at noon.

He is native of Syracuse and a 1973 graduate of the West Hill School system. He holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree from St. John Fisher College and a Master of Divinity Degree from Christ the King Seminary. In addition, he has participated annually in 40 hours of special training from the Department of Corrections

He has served as Associate Pastor of Sacred Heart in Utica, Associate Pastor of St. Mary's in Rome, and has served as a chaplain to the NYS Corrections from February 1989 until his recent retirement as the chief of chaplains for the NYS Corrections Department.

Father Weber was Ordained a Priest on October 31, 1981, He is looking forward to his time as Pastor of St. Mary's in Clinton and Sacramental Minister to St. Patrick - St. Anthony Church in Chadwicks.

This appointment is effective on July 1, 2022. Msgr. Jim Lang will continue in his role as temporary Administrator of St. Mary's and Sacramental Minister for St. Patrick - St. Anthony until July 1.

The following is an article posted in the Catholic Sun to celebrate Fr. Weber's 40th Anniversary as a priest. Published 2021.



Father Robert C. Weber Jr. has an unusual vocation, even within the special ministry of the priesthood.

In 1984, he was asked if he was interested in prison ministry. "I said yes, and here I am," he said, with 37 years in that specialty. He added, "God opened the door so I walked through it."

He was a chaplain for 28 years at Mid-State Correctional Facility in Marcy. Since 2012, he has served as the Ministerial Program Coordinator for the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision. A colleague and he are each responsible for half of the state, which amounts to 17 or 18 prisons for Father Weber. He covers hubs: Oneida, in Rome; Wende, in Buffalo; Clinton, in Dannemora; and Watertown.

Father Weber is the liaison between the Central Office in Albany and the facilities for situations or questions involving the chaplains and religious programs. "I call myself the help desk," he said.

Asked if chaplains run into a lot of despair in those they serve, he said: "I would say hope instead of despair. And the primary role of the chaplain is to give the incarcerated person the tools so that they can have a better life, and that's a good responsibility to have. And like all the ministries, you never see the fruits of your labor ..., really don't have contact with them afterwards, you can't have contact with them afterwards. ... Same as a parish priest: You don't know. May see it down the road."

He has stayed with his Ordination theme, Matthew 25:40-45, which says in part: "And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'"

Asked what he is reflecting on concerning his 40th jubilee on Oct. 31, Father Weber said:

"It's just been a lifetime ministry, so I guess it's a daily reflection. And I've always tried to live off that theme in the Scripture and also ... personal relationships. My big word is presence: p-r-e-s-e-n-c-e. We've got to be present to those who are in need. And that's in the parish, that's in the prison, that's anywhere you go — hospital. ...

"There's a difference between presence and being present. You could talk to me now and I could be looking out the window at the trees or something; then I'm not being present to you. ... We are the people who — especially Chaplains — are the people bringing light into the darkness."

John 8:12 carries that thought: "Jesus spoke to them again, saying, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.'"