

"All You Need Is Love" – A Heartfelt Farewell to Father Collins

On Sunday, June 14, our parish family gathered for a beautiful and memorable day to celebrate Father Collins as he begins a new chapter as Pastor of St. Anthony's Parish in Rocky Point. Throughout his years with us, Father Collins ended his emails with the simple yet powerful words, "All You Need Is Love." Those words became the inspiration and theme for our farewell celebration a reflection of the love, kindness, faith, and joy he has shared with our parish community.

The day began with a packed church as parishioners, visiting clergy, friends from neighboring parishes, and guests came together to celebrate the Holy Mass and honor Father Collins. As everyone entered the church, they received a commemorative booklet containing a heartfelt tribute to Father Collins, along with a special prayer for him and a prayer for each of us as he begins this next chapter of his priesthood.

Following Mass, everyone gathered for a nautical-themed reception featuring Father Collins' favorite colors—navy, white, and gray. Deacon John welcomed everyone by reading the prayer from the commemorative booklet. Song sheets were distributed, and our organist, Tom, together with Rebecca, led everyone in a joyful rendition of "All You Need Is Love," with the entire room singing to Father Collins in gratitude and affection.

Guests enjoyed an abundance of delicious food. The Knights of Columbus prepared a wonderful barbecue featuring all the favorites, while parishioners generously contributed homemade salads and side dishes. Our parish teens cheerfully served lunch as Tom provided beautiful piano music throughout the afternoon. The dessert table was filled with homemade treats lovingly prepared by parishioners. A stunning cake and delicious biscotti were generously donated by a parish family who owns a local bakery, adding a special touch to the celebration.

One of the most touching parts of the afternoon was the Well Wishes Jar, where parishioners wrote personal notes, prayers, and messages of gratitude for Father Collins to read and treasure in the days ahead. As a small keepsake of the day, everyone received a gift bag featuring Father Collins' beloved saying, "All You Need Is Love," tucked inside a small porcelain heart along with a thoughtful poem and chocolates to take home. The celebration concluded as Father Collins cut his farewell cake following the reading of a beautiful original poem by Nanci DeSantis. It was a touching tribute that perfectly captured the spirit of the day. Our heartfelt thanks go to everyone who helped make this celebration so meaningful—from those who planned, decorated, cooked, baked, donated, served, sang, volunteered and to every parishioner who made Father Collins feel so deeply loved.

Father Collins has shown this parish what it means to lead with faith, compassion, kindness, and love. He has touched countless lives through his ministry, his warm smile, his caring heart, and his unwavering devotion to God and His people. While he will be greatly missed by all of us, we know the parishioners of St. Anthony's will warmly embrace him and quickly come to love him as we have.

Most of all, thank you, Father Collins, for the love you shared with our parish family.

On June 14, we had the privilege of giving that love right back to you.

God bless you as you begin your ministry at St. Anthony's Parish. Remember, Father...

All You Need Is Love!