

October 2017 Article: "Not Missing a Beat"

During the time that I've been here in the Cleveland area, I've seen my favorite band growing up, the British band Yes, be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Back in 1972, their original drummer of four years suddenly left the band right before they were to go on a major tour. The band then scurried to find a replacement.

They found one in Alan White who had been playing for John Lennon—one of the former members of the Beatles. Alan, who was just in his early twenties, had just three days to learn all of Yes' music—five albums worth—before the tour began. He succeeded in doing so as he never missed a beat in performing the band's long and often complex songs. He has since been Yes' drummer for the past forty-five years.

In stepping so quickly into the newly formed dual parish of St. John, Elyria and Zion, Lorain, I can relate to what Alan White once went through. Even as an experienced pastor, there is much that I must learn and in a short amount of time. There are not only two new church set-ups to learn, but also a whole new two point parish relationship. All this comes just days after departing my previous call and in the aftermath my sister-in-law, Ellen LeClaire, passing away after a brief illness in August.

I would love to say that in what lies ahead in the days to come that, like Alan White, I "won't miss a beat". But shepherding a Church—and a newly formed dual parish at that—is not like being a drummer in a rock and roll band. There is so much more at stake and it is of eternal significance. There are the ever-pressing enemies of Satan, the world, and my sinful flesh to contend with. Mistakes are often made in warfare. How true this can be in the midst of the even greater fight that is spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6:12)!

As it has been throughout your histories, both St. John and Zion has called a flawed, imperfect, and sinful man to serve as pastor (Luke 5:8). I can only look at things the way King Solomon, then in his early twenties, once did as he prayed, "So give your servant an understanding heart to judge your people to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of yours?" (1 Kings 3:9). Yes, I might "miss a few beats" along the way. But thankfully, we have a perfect Savior who never missed a beat in saving us and setting us free from sin and death.

Our perfect Savior, Jesus Christ, has said "no" to sin and a resounding "yes" to us. May He guide and direct us in our partnership to come and for the growth of His Kingdom in both Elyria and Lorain, Ohio.

Your Brother in Christ,

Pastor Bill Mugnolo