

**23 Pentecost
October 28, 2018**

**In the name of God, who in Jesus
taught us the meaning of unconditional love.
Amen**

Oh Happy Day!! Isn't this just a delightful, happy.. occasion as we gather here this morning to give Thanks for all that the Lord has given us.. in the person and priesthood of Fr. Ted.!! And... to try to have him know how much he means to us,/ not only here at church, but in our lives!

Our opening Collect, our first prayer this morning, began with the words: "Almighty and everlasting God, increase in us... the gifts... of faith, hope and love..." ///// I hear these words in a new way this morning... as we are here to celebrate and give thanks for Fr. Ted's 10 years as our fearless leader, the one who has guided us with his messages Sunday after Sunday, which have helped us to increase in faith, hope and love. ... just as our opening petition today said in prayer.

In God's infinite wisdom, Ted came to be our priest/// and brought with him... his wonderful gifts.. of inspiring leadership,... timely and challenging, scripture based, preaching... and the treasure of his bride: the exceptional Caren Goldman.///

Not long after Ted became our Vicar, he led us in identifying what really matters to us as a church, our Core Values; and he challenged us in formulating our Mission and Vision statements,... which have guided, not only our spiritual growth, individually, and as a congregation, but also our awareness of the community beyond St. Cyprian's and the countless ways we could make a difference by offering the many talents and gifts we have among us. He has inspired us to name our gifts, identify our talents, and then offer what we can, to make our Core Values manifest in our own lives and in our lives together as St. Cyprian's Church. /// By his steadfast presence among us, in word and action, Ted urges us, always, to "Take seriously what Jesus took seriously." /// And so, /little by little, /and more and more, /through our time together, we each, in our own way, has begun to get it,... and to make the statement of 'taking seriously what Jesus took seriously' a significantly important part of our decision- making and our use of time, treasure and talent.// I know others would join me in thanking Ted for just that.// Whoa! I think I hear an AMEN there! Surely in MY heart I do.//
///Oh, but there is so much more.

You know, there really is something more...Certainly, along with our realization of all Ted continually gives to us in his teachings and his example of making a difference in our community beyond this church, we have deep gratitude for HIS love for us. /// He has said more than once, that St. Cyprian's is the church he always dreamed a church could be! And we FEEL that love, and it inspires us to try to be the best we can be,// and it encourages us to recognize and own our God-given gifts and then offer themto make St. Cyprian's stronger and to help make the world a better place. ///// / I know that for many of us, when

we count the blessings we know in our lives, high on the list, is this St. Cyprian's, here for us, week by week. A place that is home. Our place in God's world, with Fr. Ted, our beloved priest, faithfully guiding us in the paths of truth and love. Ted has the strength we lean on, the integrity we trust, the spiritual depth we draw fromas we journey together, with a sense of purpose, dedication, and direction.

As we are assured in countless ways of Ted's love for us here at St. Cyprian's, and his commitment to caring involvement in the community, may we do all we can to show him that we HAVE paid attention! And that we will continue to do all we can to make life easier for others... and to provide a welcoming, embracing place here, for any and all, who are seeking to deepen their faith, to perhaps gain a sense of a Closer Walk with God. Perhaps to be enfolded within a faith community where we worship our Holy God, even WITH our doubts, or fears, or concerns too deep for words. That St. Cyprian's will continue to be a bright light for some in dark times, a soothing experience for those who are hurting, and an inspiration for all, no matter where they may be on their own spiritual journey in life. Ted's sermons have helped us to hear our Lord say to each of us in our tough times, just as in today's Gospel, blind Bartimaeus heard, "Take heart, get up, Jesus is calling you."////////

It has been said that all too often we do not realize what we have until it is gone. This is said most often in reference to a relationship or a particular person. ///// Well, let it never be said that WE don't realize what we have in Ted Voorhees. WE KNOW that we are blessed beyond imagining that he chooses to hang out with us! // We know that nothing in life can stay the same always, so that makes us all the more mindful of our special blessing in having Ted at the helm here.//////////

////////In Ted's first sermon here as Vicar, he likened his ministry with the people of St. Cyprian's to the relationship of the Covenant of Marriage. And I would like to remind us of that in this sermon today, because certainly in the Ten years of Fr. Ted's ministry among us, he has kept his part of the Covenant of a New Ministry; the Covenant of the new entity... of Ted and us, where each has responsibilities and promises to keep. ...working together, as we are guided by God's presence among us, to be as responsible and supportive of one another as we possibly can be,... with God's help. ///// Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place!! And in this Covenant of shared ministry. ... WE know that each of us, personally, has been strengthened, because Ted is amongst us as one who leads us, guides us and inspires us. // And, we know that St. Cyprian's has been truly renewed and revitalized, and is now, quite notably, warmly welcoming, celebrating, and loving. ...We also know that Ted has been in the Community as one, who in every way, has helped St. Cyprian's to be a cornerstone of strength and goodness in this Lincolnville Community, and beyond, in the city of St. Augustine. ////

Through Ted's leadership, St. Cyprian's has become a haven for diverse persons in their spiritual journeys, a force for good in the community and a beacon of hope, through its presence and its commitment to seek and to serve all others in Christ's name, and to respect the dignity of EVERY human being, as our Baptismal vows direct us. // We know that the world can be a hurting place for many, in many ways. One of St. Cyprian's Core Values, as

developed by Fr. Ted and parishioners, is to be a community committed to responding to the needs of others, and so we do, and in so doing, WE have grown in our own spiritual lives and in our genuineness of expressions of love for the Other.///// So many of us have personally experienced the nourishment of words of encouragement, forgiveness, acceptance, faith, and love that we find here.////////

Ten years ago, at The Celebration of A New Ministry, when I preached at the joyous Celebration of our new Covenant with Ted Voorhees as our Priest, I quoted St. Paul, which I would like to again on this very special occasion. St. Paul's chapter on Love- in First Corinthians, includes these words: "And now, I will show you a.. still more excellent way." // And that was indeed providential, because our Fr. Ted has indeed shown us... a more excellent way!

So now, Caren, if you will please come forward and stand with your beloved, as the congregation joins me in an expression of our love, and gratitude to Ted as we rise to applaud all that he has given us// and all that he is to us! May God be praised! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!