



David Lupo

Good morning. My name is David Lupo. I'm a member of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, a priest in that order. This order was sent from Belgium in 1905 to begin this new diocese of Fall River at the invitation of Bishop William Stane. So we came from Belgium and we took up a number of parishes.

Nowadays we're down to three, but a number of parishes in the New Bedford-Fairhaven area, maybe one in Acushnet, as well. I'm not sure when we took on St. Francis Xavier.

But anyhow, we came in 1905 and in the very same year the people of New Bedford, the Cape Verdean people, obtained on 15 August, and purchased on 15 August, a little church of their own on Water Street. And Father Stanislaus Bernard was the first pastor. One of our Sacred Hearts priests was first pastor there.

We were all gathered in New Bedford, but he would take the bike every day over to the parish on Water Street and would offer mass and I think said somewhere he would play the organ, as well. So we came in 1905, at a time when the Cape Verdean people had made a name for themselves in the whaling industry, fishing industry, and afterwards as the cotton mills and cranberry bogs began to call for workers, they were there, as well, and they made a big difference, as well. We don't know exactly when the people from Cabo Verde started coming over, maybe as far back as the Revolutionary War. I don't know for sure. I'm not sure how many people really know.

So life continued at Water Street, the little parish on Water Street. Clubs were formed, the Our Lady of the Assumption Club, St. Martin de Porres Guild, and things went well until about, I guess 1954, August... was it August of '54 that Hurricane Gloria came and did some real damage to the parish. And I'm not sure who the pastor was there at the time, maybe Father Edmund Francis. People here remember Father Francis. All the old ones, of course, remember Father Edmund Francis, and maybe he was the pastor at the time of the hurricane. And so a new parish was built, a new parish church building, here on South Sixth, between Madison and what's now Joli Gonzalves, the parish. A new parish was created and start all over again.

Now the pastor was Father Rafael Flamia, an Italian, Italian American, of course. So that was 1957 and I was born in '57. I'd say the church is a little bit older than I am. Maybe it was also created in August of '57, as was the original church. But anyhow, the church building's a little older than I am, probably in better shape, too.

And so I come along in the '80s, coming into the community in 1984 and making my first visits to Our Lady of the Assumption. And at the time the priests were Father Joachim Schultz and Father Boniface Jones. The two of them were here. And there used to be one of those elevator lifts that would take... I forgot which priest was unable to get up the steps. I think it was Father Schultz. So he would get in the seat and press the button and the elevator seat would take him up along the railing to upstairs in the rectory. Rectory is kind of kitty corner from the parish right now. It's a big yellow house, just 30 feet farther down the road, farther down South Sixth and across the street. Can't miss it.

Later on after Father Schultz and Fr. Boniface Jones, Father Tom McElroy was here. Then after him, I think Father Bob Charlton was here along with Father Fred Meyers. And together they were with the team. This had to be maybe in the '90s, I think perhaps, I'm not sure. At some point, Father Alphonsus McHugh was here. Maybe he was here after Father Bob. But he too spent some time here, Father Alphonse McHugh.

Sometime after Father McHugh, Father David Reed made his first pastorage here, along working with Father Richard Lifrak. Now Father David Reed had a great idea. It never transpired though. The great idea was that of leaving America and going over to Cabo Verde and trying to start something in Capo Verde, maybe a parish, maybe a school or something, so that we could have learned more from them what their culture was all about and learn their ways. Maybe the language, as well, learn to speak a little Creole, but that never happened, never went down.

I think it's a fantastic idea that just never transpired. So he was here with Father Richard Lifrak, and after that I



don't know where he went, but anyhow, Rich Lifrak was alone around 2000. So it was around 1997 that I became the vocation director. And I lived in residence with Father Richard Lifrak here at OLOA. So it was my first time here in residence.

And great things happened. I think Father Richard tried to keep things going and so forth, with the clubs, and he was a jolly fellow. People had great things to say about him. I left around... let's see, in 2003 to go elsewhere. But I always tried to make it back here to visit whoever was the pastor here.

Later on came, let's see, Father Stan Coloso was here, as well. And after Father Stan, might've been Father Chris San Angelo. And after him, Father Joseph Pasala and Father Sudhir Niyak who are both from India, Joe Pasala and Sudhir Niyak from India. And not long after that, Father David E made a return. But at that time he was not well and he really suffered and after a short time here, had to go to the retirement residence because of struggling with cancer. Father Pat Fanning came and I am here after Father Pat Fanning.

So just a lot of good ideas. As it is, we have masses at present, three a weekend, the vigil at 4:00 PM Saturday, the two masses on Sunday morning, one at 9:00. First two are in English, and then 11:00 AM on Sunday in Portuguese. Now I don't speak a word of Portuguese, but I offer the Portuguese mass. I do the best I can with pronunciation. And so far so good. I mean, no one has thrown rotten tomatoes at me. No one has shouted from the back, "Hey, Lupo, stay with English."

So again, I do my best and the people seem to be pleased and great things, I don't know, down the line. Have a couple ideas. Just try to shore up our parish council and boost our liturgical committee and our finance committee. Things have sagged through the years. My predecessors weren't the best at keeping things in shape. So that's my task now, looking ahead. Just minor stuff, working in the parish, building up what has yet to find its highest point. So thank you for this opportunity. Blessings on you and thank you.