

## **PERSONAL STATEMENT by Fr Robbie Low - Divine Mercy Sunday – 2nd Sunday of Easter 2026**

My thanks to Fr Placidus for giving me this opportunity to make a personal statement.

As most of you know the rule in the Catholic Church is that, at the age of 75, every priest must offer his resignation to his superior.

Only the Pope is exempt !

Last October I reached that age. I am not the Pope.

When a bishop was finally appointed, I duly offered my resignation to Bishop Nicholas. He graciously saw Sara and I for an hour and a half in his study and gave permission for me to see the parish and Fr Placidus through until this recent and joyful and glorious celebration of Easter.

Bishop Nicholas then wrote:

‘Thank you for offering your resignation which I accept. I am very grateful to you for offering to continue in your current role until Easter and happy for you to continue helping and carrying out your priestly functions as and when your health permits. Thank you for all that you and Sara have given of yourselves to serve the people of this diocese. I am pleased and grateful that you are willing and able to continue contributing to the Diocese’s mission.’

So what does all this mean for you, the parish, for Fr Placidus and for us?

In one sense EVERYTHING CHANGES.

In another sense much remains the same.

We are not moving away. We are not stopping going to church!

It still remains my final ambition to have my coffin, when the time comes, standing over the very place where I was ordained to the Priesthood of the Universal Church (on that bit of carpet there before the great granite altar) with Masses celebrated for the repose of my soul at the beautiful Altar of the Martyrs in the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament.

The key will be my health. Those of you who have worked closely with me over our twenty two years in this parish will have observed that my Parkinson's Disease, which I have had for twelve years now, has accelerated over the last two years and the medication is, as predicted, working less well. The result is longer and longer periods of low battery, poor concentration, complete lack of facial expression, forgetfulness often of the simplest things, physical cramps and inertia. The rate of my future decline is unknowable.

That is the bad news. The good news is that, as long as I am able and at the discretion of Fr Placidus, I will be at the altar here for the parish.

Of course, in the immediate few weeks and months I hope to be able to take some time away to catch up with old friends, have a holiday and, most important, get a retreat to refuel my spiritual tank which, in motor racing terms, has been 'running on fumes' over the last few months.

I want to say a few 'thank yous' now.

It has been the great privilege of my life to serve as a Catholic Priest in this ancient and original mission parish of my native country.

From the moment of our arrival here in 2004 we were welcomed with open arms, befriended and encouraged towards the priesthood. Fr Guy was a real star in all this but not alone. I have had the privilege of working under five successive parish priests and getting on with them all.

Fr Keith saw me through to ordination and Fr Ciaran employed this English oddity with great humour and affection. Fr Placid and I have got off to a very good start. I am grateful to them all.

It has been a great joy to work with serving teams and musicians to the glory of God in this special house of prayer.

I have been honoured to be involved

In the fundraising which achieved our Parish Centre and its subsequent life

In the long haul to renewal of Wadebridge church

In the re-ordering of the church here

In the acquisition and installation of the beautiful Altar of the Martyrs by my friend Philip Chatfield, leading stonemason and sculptor.

In the equipping of the Church with that fabulous new organ with the help and inspiration of my late friend, Peter Bray.

In the refurbishing of our churches with decent vestments and

In my annual appeal to fund the wonderful Pilgrimage to Lourdes and twelve years as their West Country chaplain.

I want to say a huge thank you to you all.

And I want to thank Our Lady for leading me home and to Pope St John Paul II for his constant inspiration and for proving that you can have Parkinsons and still be Pope – never mind a simple parish priest.

Above all I want to publicly say a 'thank you' beyond words to my wife, Sara. Her unfailing love, support, encouragement and prayer fuelled-faith, have been the both the bedrock and springboard of my ministry over more than half a century. Not to mention her economic support, still working at 75, without which I could not have served here unpaid for all these years. So this is not 'goodbye' but a change of gear. I thank the Lord for all that has been. I praise Him for all that is and I entrust myself to Him in all that will be. Amen. Alleluia.