

Transitions continued...

Much later, Fr. Becker took a more pragmatic approach to transitions while he, then in his mid-sixties and with some 40 years of pastoral experience behind him, was serving as rector of St. Mark's in Philadelphia, an early center of Anglo-Catholicism in the United States. In a letter to Fr. Stephen Weissman, St Andrew's rector from 1975 to 1990, he commented on the rapid turnover of clergy often experienced by small churches and the potential danger it created. Priests had "hardly any time to establish anything very permanent before the next priest comes along and changes everything. I wonder that the people ever take any priest seriously."

Becker undoubtedly had in mind St. Andrew's, which had been a brief stopover for priests, including himself, for most of its history. His prayerful farewell and blunt remarks to Weissman close to half a century later are very different, but perhaps are complementary expressions of the clerical calling.

-Jim Weingartner

Note: Father Becker, source of wonderful anecdotes from his time at St. Andrew's and donor of the Christus Rex that, save during Lent, hangs on our reredos died in 2012 at the age of 95. Preaching the homily at his requiem mass was the Most Reverend Frank T. Griswold, 25th Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church (retired), doing honor to a wise and holy priest who, for a brief time, had been one of ours.