

Living the
Gospel



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THE GIFT OF PRIESTHOOD



A couple of weeks ago, May 8 marked the thirtieth anniversary of ordination to the priesthood of Jesus Christ. It seems unbelievable to me that I have been ordained this long and I would imagine that married couples experience the same disbelief with the quick passing of the years as well. Anniversaries, as someone once told me, are not so much a marking of the number of years since a major event occurred, but rather, they mean "you are". This most recent anniversary echoes this truth to me, reminding me

that I am and have been called to be a priest.

In reality, this anniversary itself says to me that this was the time thirty years ago when the Church officially called me to the priesthood, but the journey goes back my lifetime to my spiritual beginning at baptism. It could very well be that I received the call to be a priest on the day I was baptized, for as long as I can remember, I wanted to be a priest. I can recall very serious moments when I would have a bath towel slung over my shoulders and would be celebrating "Mass" on top of the TV set when I was about 4 or 5 years old. There would be snickers and chiding coming from my older siblings who were in the kitchen, but I remember the stern looks I would return in response to their seeming sacrilege on what I was doing. While those days were more imitation than knowledge about what a priest is and what his calling entailed, the sense of the nobility and the call to be a priest was very much a present reality to me even then.

The first incident I remember as God calling me was from that grade one class with Sr. Mary Jacqueline when she asked our class what we would like to be when we grew up. (My mother loved to tell people that I used to say, "If I grow up...".) I remember my fellow classmates, girls and boys, raising their hands and naming off professions such as a nurse, a doctor, a farmer, an astronaut, a policeman, a fireman, etc. And I remember raising my hand and pronouncing so clearly those seven simple yet profoundly prophetic words, "I WOULD LIKE TO BE A PRIEST". In hindsight, it was quite a diplomatic move to say to a Roman Catholic nun that you were destined to be a priest, for you were sure to pass on to the next grade no matter how bad your grades, or so my thinking was at the time. It wasn't so much the words themselves that struck me as they poured out of my mouth, but the truth of them and what happened after they were uttered. I remember that my heart began to pound in my little six-year-old chest and that I suddenly was filled with the most wonderful sensation that I can only liken to being filled with cotton candy. Today, as I look back to that incident, I had received what is called a 'witness of the Spirit', which is when God's Holy Spirit

gives you a real sense of His presence and power and truth. Way back then, in that classroom in that rather small school, God had again called me and let me know that I belonged to Him.

I did pass from grade one to grade two that year, despite my lack of zeal and interest in anything that had to do with school, and I would like to think that like Jesus, I too grew in "age, grace and wisdom".

Having talked to many seminarians and priests in my life, I know that each person's vocation story is unique and personal to them and, in many ways, is not always easy to describe or define. My own experience of call has been one of many personal and memorable experiences of the power and presence of God; incidences when I just knew God was speaking to my heart and allowing me to get to know Him better and more personally. I can recall always feeling a special relationship with the Lord Jesus as being God's little boy. Thankfully, though the stresses of day-to-day living have changed and increased in my life as responsibilities and challenges have come my way, I have never lost that sense of being, like Mary, 'favoured'. And that sense has led me to feel and know that no matter what happens, I belong to the Lord and I am in his hands.

Priesthood is not a martyrdom. It is a pull from above and not a push from below. Of myself, I could not simply choose to be a priest, and I've always said that "I want to be someone who is sent, not someone who just went". Having "the call" and responding to it doesn't of course mean that life will always be smooth sailing - it isn't for anybody. It does mean, however, that once again heaven has touched the earth as God's whisper can speak to the heart, and that a soul created in the image and likeness of God - even mine - has been called to make that image and likeness visible in his own, and I hope that in many ways I have.

I believe that God has not ceased calling men (and little boys) to be priests, but that His voice is so often drowned out or is not audible in a noisy world in pursuit of its own earthly desires. I thank God for the privilege and call to priesthood and have never once looked back on my own decision to say yes to that call with any sense of regret or second thoughts. It is pure gift. I am grateful also for all those priests who during my childhood and teenage years stood as models of joy and commitment in serving the Lord, and still do, especially those priests who have such an evident love and reverence for the Eucharist. I'm appreciative of my brother priests who have walked with me this road seldom taken. The reality of doing the unimaginable through the gift of the priesthood and in touching lives even as my life continues to be touched, continues to fill me with an inner joy and a sense of peace that I never knew was possible.

If any boy, young man or adult male who reads this and has felt the tug of the Holy Spirit calling you, don't hesitate in saying yes to the Lord for, *"the Lord will not lead you where His grace will not keep you"*. Also, I am here for you and with you as you journey, discern and walk with the Lord. For God never shouts His call to us but whispers it again and again in our heart, the source of our love. (Fr. Charles)



MASS  **SCHEDULE & INTENTIONS**

Tuesday May 30th
8:30am +Marie Pilon
Requested by the O'Hearn Family

Wednesday May 31st
7:00pm +Jim Groves
Requested by the Family

Intentions of Paula Petrovic
Requested by Vera Petrovic

Thursday June 1st
8:30am Intentions of Dr. Jim Armitage
Requested by Ken Wright

Friday June 2nd
7:30pm Holy Hour
8:30am +Clemence Bertrand
Requested by the O'Hearn Family

+Charlie Sanchez
Requested by Sandy Mattacott

Saturday June 3rd
3:30pm Confessions

4:30pm +Dick Doughy
Requested by Knights of Columbus 3rd
Degree. Fr. Lally Council

Sunday June 4th
9:00am For the People

11:00am Fr. Eduardo Evans
Requested by Vera Petrovic

Please Pray for the Sick

Chelsea Cando, Dorothy Dynes, Margot Brandreth, Ken Buchan, Jean Ferguson, Fred Coulson, Gwen Collard, Janine Wright, Emilie Gosselin, Mark Zalter, Francesco Hoedl & Family.

Pray for those who have died recently

Our Sanctuary Lamp Burns
For the Parishioners of St. Mary's
From May 28 to June 3rd 2023



Regular Collection \$4750.00 (Inc PAG)



CWL RAFFLE TICKETS

Last chance to buy 50/50 tickets this weekend,
The draw will take place Sunday May 28th after
The 11:00am Mass



Pentecost Sunday
May 28, 2023

ShareLife-funded agencies turn no one away

Did you know that no one is turned away from ShareLife-funded agencies due to inability to pay? This is all thanks to your generosity to our annual appeal. It is through your support that ShareLife agencies are able to help the most vulnerable in our community and around the world.

ShareLife currently supports over 40 agencies across the archdiocese. While the pandemic put a strain on the services of the agencies, they continued to support the ones who need it the most. This was made possible through your kind and generous donations.

Without your support, the more than 150,000 people who are helped each year would not receive the hope offered through the important work of these agencies. Thus far, we have raised \$18,217.50 toward our goal of \$43,000.00. Please give at the parish using a ShareLife envelope, online through our parish website, or at sharelife.org/donate.

PRE-AUTHORIZED GIVING

The Archdiocese of Toronto has established a Pre-Authorized Giving Plan (PAG) to assist you in your support of the work of the parish through your regular parish offerings. To accomplish the mission entrusted to us by Christ, the parishes depend entirely on the generosity of their parishioners. Pre-authorized giving allows you to give to your parish through scheduled monthly transfers from your bank account. These funds are then deposited directly to the parish account. There are various benefits of participating in pre-authorized giving, both for you and for your parish. Advantages for you:

- The convenience of having your offering automatically contributed to the parish.
- Knowing you continue to support the parish even when you are away
- Regular, dependable contributions to the parish.
- Reduction of cash on hand.
- Reduction of paperwork. For information on how to enroll, please contact your parish office.

CHURCH BULLETIN ADVERTISING.

Liturgical Publications will be setting up the advertisements for our church bulletin. The advertising will begin in December 2022 & supports the bulletin service. Please support the bulletin and advertise your product or service. Call Liturgical Publications at 1-800-268-2637

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