



My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This past week, I celebrated my 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ordination to the priesthood (June 7<sup>th</sup>), and 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of being at St. Patrick Parish (June 10<sup>th</sup>). As I reflect on the grace of God, that He would choose me to be an instrument of bringing the Holy Eucharist to His people, and half of my priesthood (so far) right here in Pelham, I am filled with gratitude and wonder! God is so good.

When we examine what the ministerial priesthood is (not to be confused with the baptismal priesthood, which we all are), it is important to note that a priest is not a priest for himself, but for others. Priesthood is NOT about power, but about service. The priest is not the CEO of the local Church Company, but a father – called to be an image of God the Father – a father who generates eternal life in us, specifically through the Sacraments and through preaching the word. Henri Lacordaire, OP said it in his poem “Thou Art s Priest Forever”

To live in the midst of the world with no desire for its pleasures;  
to be a member of every family, yet belonging to none;  
to share all sufferings; to penetrate all secrets, to heal all wounds;  
to daily go from men to God to offer Him their homage and petitions;  
to return from God to men to bring them His pardon and hope;  
to have a heart of fire for charity And a heart of bronze for chastity;  
to bless and to be blest forever.

O God, what a life, and it is yours, O Priest of Jesus Christ!

This is the call of the priesthood.

This weekend is the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ. We are called to remember this great grace of God that He would choose to be close to us, to give us His very self through the Eucharist. Not in symbol only, but in reality does He give Himself to us in the Eucharist. By the Eucharist, God remains present to us until the end of time. By the Eucharist, we can come close and pour out our hearts to Him. By the Eucharist, we come into union with the God of the Universe. By the Eucharist, we can unite our bodies to God’s, our hearts to God’s, our minds and wills to God’s. By the Eucharist, we gain eternal life (John 6). By the Eucharist – the very Body and Blood of Jesus poured out in sacrifice on the Cross for us – the world is saved and set free! St. Padre Pio said that “It would be easier for the world to exist without the sun than without the Holy Mass.”

Because God has chosen to give us this incredible grace of the Eucharist, and made it essential for the salvation of the world, we then need the priest. Without the ministerial priesthood, there would be no Mass, no Eucharist.

I ask you to pray for priests. First, I ask you to pray for those who are priests, that we may grow in holiness, not in laxity, that we may resist the tug of the world to lukewarmness and be set on fire, so that we may draw others into the fire of holiness in the Heart of God. Second, I ask you to pray for more priests. Please pray that the Master of the Harvest sends out laborers for His harvest so that we may always have access to the incredible gift of Jesus in the Eucharist, Reconciliation, and all the Sacraments!