

Solemnity of the Ascension Year “A”  
May 20-21, 2017

“A Reason for Hope”

Readings: Acts 1:1-11; Ephesians 1:17-23; Matthew 28:16-20

The weekend of priestly ordinations is not only one of the most joyous days in the life of this local Church. It also gives us an opportunity to reflect on the importance of assiduously working to promote vocations to the priesthood and religious life, a shared duty of all Catholics. We are again blessed with a Mass of Thanksgiving for a parishioner, one of ten new priests for this Archdiocese yesterday in a beautiful ceremony.

Our Gospel exhorts us to “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations,” a phrase featured prominently in Latin on the façade of this building. *Euntes Ergo Docete Omnes Gentes*. It stands as a testament to our ultimate calling as disciples of our Lord. Many do not know just how much work that carving entailed. Designed by a French American sculptor by the name of Leon Hermant, assisted by a team of master carvers, it took men four years perched high atop the maze of scaffolding that covered the front of the Cathedral, using simple mallets and chisels.

But the phrase, if it means anything, must be put into practice, and it is a call for each one of us by means of our Baptism. It is quite appealing for some to live their Catholic Faith more quietly, without fanfare. I totally respect this. At the same time, things have changed so much in the world that we also must be prepared to stand up more publicly for our faith. The lay faithful live their vocation to the fullest when they witness and bring to bear their faith into the Public Square, in the workplace and communities.

Some are called to a more public leadership role, including the ministry to the priesthood and religious life. For me, there was some trepidation regarding the public nature of the role as a priest.

I quickly got over that fear, when I realized that I would be given the training needed to be more confident in public settings. My fear at being asked to proclaim a reading at the seminary Mass quickly subsided, and I trusted that I would grow into these roles.

I can honestly share with you that I have always been proud to be a priest, even in the darkest moments of the past twenty-eight years, including times when we have all struggled with some of what has transpired in the Church. Things have also changed:

Median Household Income:	\$28,906.00
Cost of a first-class stamp:	\$0.25
Cost of a gallon of regular gas:	\$1.12
Cost of a dozen eggs:	\$0.96
Cost of a gallon of Milk:	\$2.34

Still, I have never questioned the fundamental commitment that I have made, even in my own weakest moments, when I have not been as loving as I am called to be, when I have lost patience, become frustrated or discouraged. I have come to realize that this is part and parcel of traversing in this “vale of tears,” and that to expect otherwise is not only unrealistic, but removes from my vocation the need to embrace the Cross. I believe that the same could be said of the sacrament of matrimony.

I know that there are young men in our midst who are open to the calling. While I want to do more for vocations than I am doing, it also occurred to me how important it is for parents to nurture these seeds of vocations in the lives of their children. We work together best when we instill this love into our children, respecting their necessary freedom to hear the call. Please join me in praying for vocations, and in rejoicing how God has blessed us.