

ORDINATION OF WILLIAM H. EDWARDS, S.M. MIC. 6:1-4;6-8
RESURRECTION CHURCH, SOLON, OHIO 2 COR. 4:1-2,5-9.13
SATURDAY, 28 MARCH 1987, 1:30 P.M. LUKE 4:14-22

THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST BE WITH YOU! --DEAR BROTHER BILL, AND MAY THE BLESSINGS YOU SEEK THIS DAY BE A JOY TO YOUR MOTHER AND FATHER, BROTHERS AND SISTERS, FRIENDS AND RELATIVES, AND CONFRERES OF THE SOCIETY OF MARY--ALL WHO HAVE GATHERED HERE TODAY, FROM WASHINGTON, AND FROM WHEELING, WEST VIRGINIA--FOR THIS GREAT DAY-- AS YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN FOR THEM ALL. YOU SEEK A BLESSING BECAUSE YOU HAVE COME TO KNOW THAT YOU ARE A GREAT BLESSING FROM GOD.

THIS GOOD NEWS! YOU PRONOUNCE TODAY JUST BY BEING HERE, PRESENTING YOURSELF BEFORE THE COMMUNITY, THE PEOPLE OF GOD, JUST LIKE THE YOUTHFUL JESUS IN THE GOSPEL PASSAGE WE READ TODAY! THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, YOU SAY WITH JESUS, "TODAY THIS SCRIPTURE IS FULFILLED IN YOUR HEARING!" GLAD TIDINGS TO THE POOR, LIBERTY TO CAPTIVES, SIGHT TO THE BLIND, RELEASE TO PRISONERS, A YEAR OF FAVOR FROM THE LORD.

YOU ARE A COMFORT AND AN ENCOURAGING WORD TO US ALL, ESPECIALLY TO THOSE OF US WHO HAVE LABORED LONG IN THE WORK OF CHRIST. YOU TELL US THAT ALL WILL BE WELL, THAT GOD IS WORKING AND WILL KEEP ON WORKING AMONG HIS PEOPLE, THAT WE SHALL NOT BE LEFT ORPHANED. YOU ARE AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT IS RIGHT WITH THE CHURCH,

WHAT IS RIGHT ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE, WHAT WILL BE GOOD ABOUT THE FUTURE. EVERY YOUNG BLACK PRIEST, RELIGIOUS BROTHER AND SISTER, COMMITTED LAY CATHOLIC APOSTLE-- EVERY ONE--SIGNIFIES HOPE. WE ARE ALIVE IN THE CHURCH OF GOD, WE HAVE GIFTS TO GIVE, FAITH TO SHARE, HOPE TO CELEBRATE, AND LOVE, ABOVE ALL, LOVE IN OUR HEARTS TO RECEIVE AND TO GIVE, FOR CHRIST'S SAKE. IN SIMILAR WORDS WE BLACK CATHOLIC BISHOPS SPOKE TO OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN OUR PASTORAL LETTER, "WHAT WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD." BUT YOU--BROTHER BILL, AND YOUR CONTEMPORARIES-- YOU PUT FLESH AND BONES, BODIES AND SOULS--TO THOSE WORDS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. YOU ARE LIVING FLESH FOR LIVING SPIRIT.

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL CROUD OF GOD'S PEOPLE HAVE GATHERED HERE AROUND YOU TODAY, BILL. THEY GATHER AS YOU COME--FOR THE SAME PURPOSE--TO HEAR THE WORD OF GOD, THEY COME LONGING FOR THE BREAD WHICH COMES DOWN FROM HEAVEN, FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD, THE BREAD OF GOD, THE BREAD OF THE POOR. BLESSED ARE THE POOR--FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN!

AS YOU SAY SO BEAUTIFULLY IN YOUR LETTER, BILL-- IT IS THE PEOPLE WHO STRENGTHEN YOU IN FAITH, WHO WITNESS TO YOU THE WORD OF GOD WHICH YOU RECEIVE AND WHICH YOU PREACH: "PRIESTLY MINISTRY IS NOT ONLY LEADERSHIP WITHIN A COMMUNITY; IT IS A MINISTRY THAT THE ORDAINED

EXERCISES BECAUSE OF THE CALL AND SUPPORT OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY."

"ORDAINED MINISTRY THUS HAS TO DO WITH MEMORY"--YOU GO ON TO WRITE-- "ENABLING A PEOPLE TO EXIST IN VIRTUE OF ITS COMMON MEMORY OF CHRIST, THE GOSPEL, AND THE COMMUNITY'S OWN TRADITIONS, DIVERSITY AND CULTURE: OUT OF THIS COMES, I BELIEVE, THE KIND OF FAITH AND HOPE FOR THE FUTURE THAT ENABLES STRUGGLING HUMAN BEINGS TO CONTINUE ON THEIR JOURNEY TOWARD'S GOD'S KINGDOM."

THESE ARE YOUR OWN WORDS, BILL--AND YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE HAS SURELY GIVEN WITNESS TO THEM: IN THE YEARS OF YOUR STUDIES, IN NEW ORLEANS AND WASHINGTON, D.C., AND THE TIME OF YOUR MINISTRY AT THE ST. THOMAS HOUSING PROJECT IN NEW ORLEANS, AND THE ADULT LEARNING CENTER, AND THE BASE COMMUNITY OF BLACK CATHOLICS WITH WHOM YOU LIVED AND WORKED, AND IN THE EDUCATION PROGRAM CALLED "BRIDGES" IN WHICH YOU WERE INVOLVED, BRINGING BROTHERS AND SISTERS FROM CITY AND SUBURB TOGETHER IN COMMON CAUSE AND UNDERSTANDING, WORKING FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE. YOU FURTHER DEEPENED YOUR COMMITMENT TO THE VOICE OF GOD IN HIS PEOPLE WITH YOUR WORK WITH THE ETHIOPIAN REFUGEES WHO LIVED WITH YOUR MARIST COMMUNITY IN WASHINGTON. INDEED--THE WORDS OF YOUR LETTER TAKE FLESH IN THE WORD OF YOUR LIFE.

"ORDAINED MINISTRY HAS TO DO WITH MEMORY,"

--THESE WORDS YOU WRITE--AND SURELY THEY MUST SPEAK TO YOUR HEART AS WELL, AS A MEMBER OF THE COMMUNITY OF THE SOCIETY OF MARY: "I BEAR MARY'S NAME AS MY OWN AND THUS SHARE IN THE LIFE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A . . . PERMANENT LIFE-LONG COMMITMENT" YOU WRITE. MARY IS YOUR LIFE, IN OTHER WORDS. AND MARY IS ALSO YOUR MEMORY, BILL--FOR RECALL HOW ST. LUKE IN HIS GOSPEL SAYS OF HER, "SHE TREASURED UP ALL THESE WORDS IN HER HEART!" [LUKE 2:19]. YOU KNOW WHAT THESE WORDS MEAN, FOR YOU TOO--LIKE MARY--STRIVE EVERY DAY TO "TREASURE UP" THE WORD OF GOD--REVEALED TO THE POOR OF GOD, AS BREAD FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD.

YOU CARRY THIS TREASURE IN EARTHEN VESSELS, AS THE EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TEACHES US TODAY--FOR YOU KNOW YOUR OWN HUMANITY AND WEAKNESS, AND THE REALITY OF THE HUMAN CONDITION IN WHICH AND AMONG THE PEOPLE YOU SERVE. THE PRIEST, THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS TELLS US, "CAN DEAL GENTLY WITH THE IGNORANT AND THE MISGUIDED SINCE HE HIMSELF IS ALSO BESET WITH WEAKNESS, AND BECAUSE OF IT HE IS OBLIGATED TO OFFER SACRIFICES FOR SINS, AS FOR THE PEOPLE, SO ALSO FOR HIMSELF." [HEB. 5:2-3]. YOU ARE SET ASIDE THIS DAY, DEAR BILL--NOT BECAUSE YOU ARE DIFFERENT OR SUPER-HUMAN--BUT BECAUSE YOU ARE SO VERY MUCH LIKE ALL OF US--AND YOU ARE PLACED NOT ABOVE, BUT RATHER, IN THE CENTER OF THE PEOPLE--NOW, MORE THAN EVER, TO BE ONE OF US.

FOR THE PRIEST IS AN INCARNATION--LIKE HIS MASTER--NOW NO STRANGER, BUT AT HOME WITH THE PEOPLE, AMONG WHOM THE ETERNAL WORD TOOK FLESH, AND DWELT AMONG US. SO MUST YOU DWELL--FATHER BILL: AMONG US, GOD'S CHILDREN--AND YOURS.

YOU COME TODAY, THIS DAY, AMONG YOUR OWN: TO DO JUSTICE, TO LOVE KINDNESS AND LOYALTY, TO WALK HUMBLY WITH GOD, AND WITH US ALL--AS OUR FIRST READING FROM THE PROPHET MICAH TEACHES US. YOUR SACRIFICES WILL NOT BE SHOWY DISPLAYS OR SELF-INDULGENT DEMONSTRATIONS OF YOUR OWN BRILLIANCE OR GENEROSITY OR BENEVOLENCE--BUT *WILL* *BE* SIMPLY, WITHOUT FANFARE OR PRETENSION, IN THE DAILY CARE OF GOD'S PEOPLE, IN SOLIDARITY WITH THOSE FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED, AMONG THE POOR AND THE PENITENT, AMONG THOSE WHO SUFFER AND ARE IN NEED--MAKING THEIR CAUSE YOUR OWN.

HOW RIGHTLY YOU PUT YOUR FINGER ON IT WHEN YOU WROTE ME: "THE LIFE OF THE PRIEST IS ONE THAT INCLUDES PRAYER--PRAYER IN ACTIVE MINISTRY AND PRAYER WHICH INVOLVES THE WORDS AND SILENCE OF ONE'S OWN HEART. IT MEANS FOR ME PARTICIPATION IN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH--EUCCHARIST AND THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS, AS WELL AS THE TIME SPENT ALONE, SOMETIMES BATTLING THINGS OUT WITH GOD. FOR MYSELF, PRAYER IS SOMETHING THAT SPRINGS FORTH FROM THE MINISTRY WHEREVER I AM, WHETHER IN THE HILLS OF WEST VIRGINIA OR THE GHETTOS OF NEW ORLEANS. AS A DEACON, I'VE FOUND THAT THE QUALITY OF MY PREACHING

HINGES ON THE QUALITY OF MY PRAYER. I CANNOT PREACH SOMETHING I PERSONALLY DON'T BELIEVE OR HAVEN'T PRAYED OVER."

PRAYER IS THE SUBSTANCE OF PRIESTHOOD ITSELF--YOU MUST BECOME THE PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE. SUSTAINED BY THEIR FAITH, ENKINDLED BY THE LONGINGS OF THEIR HEART, YOU MUST BECOME THEIR VOICE, THEIR CRY--YES, THEIR PRAYER. RECEIVE TODAY THE WORD OF GOD AND BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, DEAR FATHER BILL, BECOME THE WORD OF HIS HOLY PEOPLE--DOMINE, EXAUDI ORATIONEM MEAM, ET CLAMOR MEUS AD TE VENIAT--OH LORD, HEAR MY PRAYER, AND LET MY CRY COME UNTO THEE. COME, FATHER BILL, BECOME TODAY THIS PRAYER.

Emmanuel

richness upon richness
Strength upon strength...

Solidarity upon solidarity

unity of purpose from

4 minutes in two previous days

of national representation &

of work in committee of various by conference,

before & after my ordination on 1/1/68,

particularly in 2 spiritualities of Am Priests...

In short, we must focus upon the giftsⁱⁿ which
we are endowed

one aspect which needs improvement: too many
priests of the Diocese of Cleveland and of our
own ethnic origin - too parochial...

we must become transcultural, transcultural,
truly Catholic...

in the depth of our prayer life & our activities
for another program, each of us must be -
who are & willing to become & what one is ready
to do to develop a truly Catholic consciousness,
and matter when I am assigned in the Diocese of
Cleveland



TALKS

is the communication of the facts + data of parish life, but the communication - the sharing - of his inner life, his deepest hopes + aspirations, ^{ABOVE ALL} his experience of God, as God reveals himself in his ongoing revelation + communication. Life you must share + give, just as Jesus gave his life

(INTRODUCTION OF PARENTS)

I. MEMORIES

Ben Spivey - ALWAYS IN THE BACK OF OUR MINDS...

II. Ben Spivey - A TREMENDOUS LOVER 2ND CORINTHIANS...

TOO SAINTLY TO BE REAL

TOO HUMAN TO BE UNREAL

THAT IS THE FIRST WORD WE CAN ADDRESS TO YOU TODAY... IT SETS THE ATMOSPHERE FOR WHAT MUST FOLLOW...

III. THE PROGRAM OF YOUR PRIESTLY MINISTRY

3 PRINCIPLES OF OPERATION:

GOD DID NOT CREATE US UNIVERSEAL MANS,

- the ^{REVELATION} PROCLAMATION OF GOD THROUGH THAT CULTURE
- the REDEMPTION + PURIFICATION
- the BLESSING + the UPDATING OF THAT STYLE OF BEING & CULTURE CAN BEST COME BY ONE WHO KNOWS IT FROM WITHIN...

RATHER, IN HIS WISDOM & LOVE GOD CREATES US BLACK & DEAF + BLIND TO HIS IMAGE &...

GOD DID NOT CREATE YOU A UNIVERSEAL MAN PRIEST

Thinking of Pope Paul VI -

"you have VALUES AND

"PRECIOUS GIFT OF NEGOTIABLE - OF BEACHES -

WHICH CHANGING NEEDS IN THIS HISTORIC HOUR"

B. 3 PRINCIPLES OF OPERATION FOR YOUR SERVICE
TO THE BLACK COMMUNITY

~~Red~~
Red

1. GIVE → LOOK ABOUT YOURSELF IN ANY

BLACK COMMUNITY - WE NEED NOT SPEAK THE OBVIOUS FORMS OF

Black

2. COMMUNICATE — PRIEST IS A SIGN OF THE
FRIENDSHIP OF GOD

Green

3. WITNESS - GO OUT...

C. A PRIME EXPRESSION OF LOVE: PREACHING →
JEREMIAH...

III FINAL WORDS OF ADVICE: LOOK TO JESUS...

Today we celebrate not only the empowerment of ordination through the laying on of hands, but we also celebrate ~~the~~ the personal event and encounter upon which that empowerment rests: those times in Ferdinand Cheri's life when he intensely felt the groanings and yearnings of the Spirit of God within his embodied spirit, the irresistible call and challenge of the Spirit, saying,

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you;
before you came to birth I consecrated you;
I have appointed you as prophet to the nations;

go, therefore, and make disciples from these nations;
baptize them,
in the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

be for me a mediator with my people;
say unto me, as did Moses:
If I find favor with you, O Lord,
do come along in our company.
We are indeed a stiff-necked people;
yet pardon our wickedness and our sins,
and receive us as your own.

Yes, Ferdinand, the Scriptures bid us today to reflect upon the mystery of your ministry as prophet, as disciple-maker, and as mediator. Today, on this Feast of the Holy Trinity, the Father

created us and continually fashions us; the Son who redeemed us and constantly liberates us; the Holy Spirit who inspirits us and and increasingly gives us new life - thás God has wooed and lured you into the mystery of the Divine Companionship of Trinitarian life and sends you forth

to tear up and to knock down,
to destroy and to overthrow,
to build and to plant.

He calls and ordains you, Ferdinand Cheri - fully human: limited, sinful, weak, sharing with those whom you are invited to serve that same incompleteness you are called to heal and reclaim for the Lord. Walk humbly, therefore, before your Lord and Saviour: from your humility will flow your strength. _____

Know yourself well, your strengths and weaknesses, your goodness and your sinfulness: from thás self-knowlesge, born of faith, will come the ability to be compassionate, tolerant, and understanding of those whom you will serve, as well as the ability to perceive within those to whom you minister those hidden talents they would not know but for the sound of your voice.

As priest, Ferd, you stand before and with the people, sharing in the priesthood of the Bishop. collaborating with him in teaching and guiding the Church, and serving as his link with the People of God. In an interlocking mission, you are prophet, disciple-maker, and mediator.

As prophet, you speak-for-God. You observe the world, as it were, with the newspaper in one hand and the Bible in the other. You feel the tragic loss for a sense for life, the godless materialism, gnashing consumerism, blasphemous racism, the erosion of human rights, the watergateness of political life, and the inveterate violence that corrodes the soul of a people - you see all of this, Ferd, and you prophecy, you speak-for-God.

You agonize over the wreckage of family life, the alienation of youth, child abuse, drug addiction, prostitution, pronography that corrodes the soul of a people - and you prophecy, you speak-for-God.

You tremor at what Lerone Bennet calls the "crisis of the Black spirit" and "the Great Black Depression," by which the desire for achievement and excellence is absent, and "we are losing a whole generation of Black people to drugs, crime, homicide, and other forms of self-destruction. For the first time in our history, says Bennet, the inner fortresses of the Black spirit are giving away. For the first time in our history, we are threatened on the level of the spirit, on the level of our most precious possession, on the level of soul. You hear this Ferdinand, and you prophecy, you speak-for-God. ✕

As disciple-maker, you bring to a human family full of possibility that Good News which alone can make us whole: Jesus the Crucified, Jesus the Lord, Jesus, the Way, Truth, and Life. With the message

of Christ and the vision of the Church for our times, you convert and re-convert, you fill a vacuous void, and share with the people a direction. You invite us to the cost of discipleship, to a commitment not to self, but to a commitment to life, to others. You reflect upon the central and memorable experiences of life in such a way that our brothers and sisters come to understand that the Gospel offers the finest explanation as to the why's and wherefore's of existence. You make disciples not by reason of your talent, but by reason of the people's innate search for sense, for meaning, for God. As disciple-maker you are the occasion not the cause: God is the irresistible yearning in the depths of the human soul. "Our hearts are restless," says St. Augustine, "until they rest in God."

Finally, as Christ's representative you are ordained as mediator between God and man:

Every high priest, says the author of Hebrews, has been taken out of mankind and is appointed to act for men in their relations with God.... Indeed, he can sympathize with those who are ignorant or uncertain because he too lives in the limitations of weakness.

If as prophet you speak-for-God, and as disciple-maker, you gather followers, then as mediator you exercise the most delicate task and the one most unique to the ordained priesthood: to speak and listen to God for man and to speak to and listen to man for God. In prayer and sacrifice you articulate our aspirations and never let God forget our needs and aspirations. As presider at the

Lord's table you keep fresh the Holy Word, give us the gift of
Finest Wheat, and lead us in the celebration of the past, present
and future of life and history. You lead us to die and risēd
with Christ in the already and not-yet of the Lord's victory.
You assist in the building of community - bringing people to-
gether, fostering dialogue, calling forth the ministries of the
laity, inciting parochial activity, healing, consoling, counseling,
celebrating the ultimate mysteries of life in the sacraments --
all because we are a people called to be one, even as Father,
Son, and Holy Spirit are one.

Introduction

A. Feast of St. Andrew

1. little known, but an orator
2. apostolic -
on historical facts & teaching
But a life, a spirit, soaring, dedicated
on interior sense - I had, personally,
"Come, follow me, ..."
3. Legend - Greece & Turkey - gave his life for the word.
4. The Twelve - establishment of disciples - for apostles 1 year later to
the word...
5. My own upper room...

B. CALLED to be Fishermen

A. My own distaste - early childhood experience

B. Paul's observation - timeless symbol

1. patience - recall do it more quickly
2. courage - can never predict the climate & ~~the~~ weather
3. eye for the right moment - when & where to ~~as~~ cast
his net or throw his rod
--- a time to speak & a time to be silent
4. fit the boat to the fish
-- different strokes for different folks
5. keep himself out of sight, ~~that~~
-- in the water
... his eyes on X's ...

C. Analytic - Embodied ...

Love now implies the danger...

That

Bl SAC

- 1) Radical departure from religion or practice
- 2) Pressing problem that U.S. Church has in face
- 3) From Holy Path perspective...

momentary approval of a
 quiet minority of the
 Church

Joy and danger of Berry focus on Xst
 Apostolic College

→ E, → historical fact, → teaching
 LIFE, Love, Service, Dedication
 Surrendering

Andrew -

Green & Turkey
 crucifix & Patience

PASTORAL THOUGHTS

1. Great possibilities for ministry

- must love people: John Paul II → dignity of person
- must perceive that people's happiness is related to faith
- give yourself - you unrepeatable self...

2. Leadership - instant; young people, especially,

- John Paul II - know who he is & where he's going...

-- so many leaders on the scene total of what people want
& no more; they are gutless...

-- context → a brainless society, relying on media

a. in the liturgy

-- preaching

b. in the parish community

c. in the civic community

d. our continued study & our association

- choose specialties - perhaps two

e. rely on each other...

f. style of leadership - listen

Jesus sent the men on mission as the Twelve

Introduction

- A. Parish + Community + Congregations
- B. Bishop Agier - invasive + elitist
- C. St Thomas

Body

1. The context of the Church's mission today - the symbols:

1. Anniversary of Guyana + its meaning

a. the U.S. Community - nothing to offer

b. the disruption of family life - psychological distress in families

c. the minorities + the poor - health, education, a welfare

d. life is cheap and disposable - poor want to work

2. Great sense of powerlessness - can't cope...

a. Rocco May

b. Genesis

"Fill the earth and subdue it.

Upon dominion over it...

3. This is the secret context of mission

2. Anniversary of the Parish - Faith Community over 100 yrs old

a. pioneering spirit in anti-Catholicism

b. new experience of a Catholic Community creating a different
model of Church, parish

Liturgical life + catechesis → contemporary

Service - to self, to others

- - meaning to life

3. Symbol of Michael Posh

- a. what good from ~~Hegel~~ Hegel
what good from Pocatelli, deleuze?

b. the mystery of your own ^{spiritual} journey

1) strong family

2) Catholic family

3) priority of person is in your family

"Nothing surpasses the greatness or dignity of a human person.

Human life is not just an idea or an abstraction.

Human life is the concrete reality of a being that lives, acts, that grows and develops.

Human life is the concrete reality of a being capable of love and of service to humanity."

Human life is precious because it is the gift of a God whose love is infinite, and who has given life, it is forever.

Human life is also precious because it is the expression and the fruit of human love.

Michael, you know what these words mean because you experienced their reality in your family, gifts from a loving father and mother.

1.
1) ~~United States of America~~
2) Paulist Community

Taney, South Bronx, D.C., Member

Michael - Jeremiah:

"Whether the object of clay which he was making turned out badly in his hand, he tried again, making of the clay another object of whatever sort he pleased."

B. All of these symbols, experiences, social realities impinge on this moment in your life. Christ is the constant part that gives meaning to it all.

But how shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe unless they have heard of him? And how can they hear unless there is someone to preach. And how can ~~any~~ people preach unless they are sent?

duty of priest: raise conscience & consciousness level of Christ!
how real is he to our experience
- so much closer to Xst

he is occasion
but in the moment

13

Temptation - Lloyo is focus of attention;

point: how all of us reach out to

refocus our attention on Xst!

AND how, because of a clerical or shaming

refocusing our attention on Xst,

we see-earch the world & bring forth

a new sense of direction!

5 Sc - implied 3 kinds of experience

Moses - ^{weight} ~~Burden~~ of the people's problems

70 Elders

Hebrews - consciousness of personal limitation

SIN OFFERINGS & PROP

Job - the challenge of authentic love

LOVE

1) Keep the commandments -

we have a tradition

" " " of our own tradition

2) FRIENDS

- Dialogue

3) FRUIT -

Produce

The Solemn Liturgy of Thanksgiving
after the Ordination to the Priesthood
Father Charles Smith, S.V.D.
Father Chester Smith, S.V.D.

The Church of Saint Anselm
Chicago, Illinois

Sunday, April 17, 1988
10:00 a.m.

Acts 3:13-15, 17-19
1 John 2:1-5
Luke 24:35-48

Most Reverend James P. Lyke, O.F.M., Ph.D.

"Today Is Easter All Over Again"

Introduction

- A. Watch out, Church, here they come!
 - B. About Jesus - "What good can come out of Nazareth?"
About Charles and Chester - "What good can come out of Altgeld Gardens?"
 - C. Above all, today is Easter all over again!
Exsultet iam angelica tuba caelorum! "Exult, heavenly powers! Sing choirs of angels!"
Rejoice! The Lord is risen!!
- I. Today is Easter all over again!
- A. Today, the Scriptures recall the Easter themes of peace, joy, victory.
 - B. In Christ's resurrection, we proclaim the triumph over sin and death and the discovery of new and everlasting life.
We celebrate -
 1. the authentication that life - for each and every human being - is worth living for and dying for, caring for and crying for
 2. the verification of the People of God as a chosen race, a holy nation, a people set apart
 3. the acclaim of Christ the High Priest and the royal priesthood of all believers

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Frs. Smith

4. the discovery in the Passover of Jesus Christ of the somebodiness of people of African descent and our common ground with all humanity

II. Yes, today is Easter all over again!

- A. In Christ's resurrection, we celebrate the ordained ministerial priesthood, that mediating voice crying from earth to eternity, from the woes of humanity to the wisdom of eternity.
- B. Today, we rejoice that priesthood is worth living for and dying for, caring for and crying for.
- C. Today, we are happy that two Black men ordained to the ministerial priesthood can uniquely enter the depths of the Heart of Christ the High Priest - to suffer, die and rise, to preach and witness to all nations - and in Chicago, and in Altgeld Gardens!

III. Today is Easter all over again!

- A. From the enclosure of Altgeld Gardens, from the remoteness of early seminary life, from the strain and stress of higher studies, from periodic and sporadic internships and pastoral experiences, from countless exciting - or boring - classes, conferences and workshops, Chet and Charlie have arisen!
- B. From their own questioning about the relevance of the Church, the consonance between the Black conscience and the ecclesiastical conscience, racism, sexism, militarism, and consumerism, and so on - Charlie and Chet have arisen with a sense of direction and a gripping conviction of the propriety and necessity of their priestly life and ministry.

IV. Today is Easter all over again! These twin brothers have magnified our Easter joy. There is a lesson for us in this.

- A. Classical mythology provides us with notable examples of twins.

1. Hercules and Iphikles - two serpents tried to kill infant Hercules in the cradle, but the Hercules strangled them to death without effort.

Chet and Charlie's strength is not in their body, but in their soul.

2. Castor and Pollux were great athletes who were known for their brotherly love. They stole their two cousins from their groomsmen on the wedding night and ran away with the brides.

I understand that Charlie and Chet have a reputation! But, I know that these relationships are purely spiritual and beyond reproach!

3. Romulus and Remus were the legendary founders of Rome. As infants they were thrown into the Tiber River. They reached shore, however, and were found and suckled by a she-wolf. Later, followers of Romulus killed Remus for jumping over the city wall.

Charlie and Chet also have such devoted supporters, but none of us are so violent; nor would we betray either of them!

- B. The twinship-friendship of Chester and Charles is much deeper than this.

1. Their dialogue began in their mother's womb, where they were "fearfully and wonderfully" made. It was in the sacredness of this flesh-temple where their first conversation was initiated: "What's happenin'?" said Charlie. Returned Chet, "Everything's all right, babe."

Surely, the poet was thinking of Charlie and Chet when he wrote:

Your friend is your needs answered.
He is your field which you sow with
love and reap with thanksgiving.
And he is your board and your fireside.

For you come to him with your hunger,
and you seek him for peace.

2. In this intimate friendship-twinship is where Charlie and Chet learned life lessons for their priesthood. Many a time they suffered, died and rose - together - for each other - and - together - for others.

When your friend speaks his mind you
fear not the "nay" in your own mind, nor
do you withhold the "ay."
And when he is silent, your heart ceases
not to listen to his heart;
For without words, in friendships, all
thoughts, all desires - all expectations are
born and shared, with joy that is unacclaimed.
When you part from your friend, you
grieve not;
For that which you love most in him
may be clearer in his absence, as the mountain
to the climber is clearer from the plain.

3. Out of the experience of their twinship, Chet and Charlie deciphered the core values of ministerial priesthood - generosity of self, sacrifice of time, talent, and treasure for the sake of preaching the Gospel and for being at the service of the People of God.

And let there be not purpose in friendship
save the deepening of the Spirit.
For love that seeks aught but the disclosure
of its own mystery is not love but
a net cast forth: and only the unprofitable
is caught.

4. Out of this experience of twinship, Charlie and Chet learned that fundamental characteristic necessary for every ordained priest if he is to be salt and light - that profound and quintessential respect for the worth and dignity of every human person.

Father Charles and Father Chester, if there is any sin that is alien to the ideal of priesthood, it is the blasphemous and "heretical" sin of disrespect for and irreverence toward the sacred character of the

human person, especially the least of our sisters and brothers. Remember, the same Christ who said, "This is my body, this is my blood," also proclaimed, "Whatsoever you do to the least of my sisters and brothers, that you do unto me."

And let your best be for your friend.
If he must know the ebb of your tide,
let him know its flood also.
For what is your friend that you should
seek him with hours to kill?
Seek him always with hours to live.
For it is his to fill your need, but not
your emptiness.
And in the sweetness of friendship let
there be laughter, and sharing of pleasures.

For in the do of little things the heart
finds it morning and is refreshed.

- V. Dear Friends in Christ, today is Easter all over again! Among some of our African forbearers, twins were a sign of rich fertility, and were believed to have special powers. They were known as "children of God and heaven," and in the midst of calamity people turned to them for intercession with God.

Father Chester's and Father Charles' friendship/twinship/priestship shall add to, sustain, and build up the body of Christ in bonds of love.

Psychologists speak of the phenomenon of "twinship transference," whereby the therapist assists the client in the search for self-discovery, meaning, and worth.

As priests, Father Charles and Father Chester shall draw upon this blessing of twinship to teach the Church a kind of "twinship transcendentalism," through which our human striving for victory over sin and death and for peace and joy might reveal for time and eternity the mystery of the Passover of Jesus Christ and assure a new wave of mercy and justice in our Church and society.

- VI. Yes, today is Easter all over again! Father Chet and Father Charlie, today you concelebrate your First Liturgy of Thanksgiving. At the sound of your voices, earth again pleas to heaven for the forgiveness of sins - and behold in our midst "the Holy and Just One," "the Author of Life," "the intercessor," "the offering for our sins."

page 6
Frs. Smith

Today is Easter all over again! Charlie, Chet, it is we who look to you and say, "Have you anything to eat?" We plead, do you have any morsel for our life's journey, our pilgrimage and our search, our anxieties and fears, our deep longing and hope? And you respond, "Jesus is here right now! Keep your eye on the prize!"

Then in the words of the old spiritual, we cry: "Give me Jesus! Give me Jesus! You may have all the world, but give me Jesus!"

Friends, in the silence of our hearts, let us ponder this holy mystery.

(The poem is taken from The Prophet, "On Friendship," by Kahill Gibran.)

4-24-88/mass of thanksgiving for frs chas and ches smith./altgeld gardens, chicago / 4th Sun. Easter - B

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE "HOME"

-----I.-----

LAST WEEK WAS THE DINING ROOM. THIS WEEK IS THE KITCHEN. LAST WEEK WAS A FEAST OF LARGE PROPORTIONS...LOTS OF FOLKS, FROM LOTS OF PLACES.....LOTS OF PRIESTS AND BISHOPS AND CHOIR MEMBERS, AND ALTAR SERVERS. LAST WEEK WAS A FEAST FOR THE EYES as Fr. Melvin James reached the epitome of his time and artistry here in Chicago, designing vestments and ceremony that dazzled the beholders. LAST WEEK WAS THE DINING ROOM. THE SOUND OF TRUMPET AND KETTLE DRUM AND SAXOPHONE STILL ECHOES IN OUR HEADS. THE SMELL OF INCENSE AND THE SACRED TONES OF LATIN STILL LINGER.

LAST WEEK WAS THE DINING ROOM, YA'LL. IT WAS GRAND, INDEED. THE SETTING WAS FORMAL AND THE GUESTS CAME IN EVERYTHING BUT TUXEDOS.

THEY SAT DOWN AT THE FORMALLY-SET DINING ROOM ALTAR TABLE...HOBNOBBED, STYLED AND PROFILED, MEETED AND GREETED, AND THEN SIPPED AND delicately DIPPED THE WONDERFUL FARE SET OUT FOR THEM.

LAST WEEK WAS THE DINING ROOM.

You know, we need to do that sometime. We need to go into the dining room sometime and bring out the finest linen and the best silverware and the fanciest dishes and just show off. We need to be able to take out that old dressy dress and those expensive earrings and that sharp suit sometime. We need to just be SEEN sometime, looking "boonshoire", "sididdy"....and "boojee"!!!! And that's ok.

SO, like I said, LAST WEEK WAS THE DINING ROOM. BUT. LET ME TELL YOU ALL, THIS WEEK IS THE KITCHEN!!!

NOW DON'T GET ALL OFFENDED AND INSULTED. I KNOW THAT THE GARDENS HAS TRULY SET IT OUT THIS WEEK. I KNOW THAT YOU ALL ARE IN YOUR EASTER SUNDAY BEST, AND HAVE SPARED NO TIME AND EXPENSE ---or recipe--- TO LET EVERYONE KNOW THAT THE GARDENS IS NOT TO BE OUTDONE BY ANYBODY!!! AND-----LISTEN WELL-----YOU SHALL NOT BE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

'CAUSE THE DISTINCTION I AM MAKING BETWEEN THE "DINING ROOM" AND THE "KITCHEN" IS NOT A DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE HAVES AND THE HAVE-NOTS. THE DINING ROOM IS NOT SUPERIOR TO THE KITCHEN...THE DINING ROOM IS SIMPLY DIFFERENT FROM THE KITCHEN. IN FACT, YOU COULD SAY THAT THE

DINING ROOM IS THE CHILD OF THE KITCHEN!!!!

NOTHING'S HAPPENING IN THE DINING ROOM IF NOTHING'S HAPPENING IN THE
KITCHEN. IF SOMEBODY DIDN'T START STIRRIN' AND BURNIN' AND TASTIN'
AND SHAKIN' AND BAKIN' IN THE KITCHEN, YOU BETTER OPEN UP SOME
RAVIOLI OR NINE LIVES IN THE DINING ROOM.....amen???

YOU SEE, THE KITCHEN SYMBOLIZES THE HOME. ...AND THERE'S NO
PLACE IN THIS WORLD LIKE HOME.

WHEN YOU COME HOME, DO YOU GO AND SIT DOWN IN THE DINING
ROOM? NO, OF COURSE NOT. WHAT YOU DO IS YOU GO UP TO THE
STOVE, OPEN UP EVERY POT AND PAN AND PUT YOUR NOSE IN. THEN YOU
STAND BACK, PUT YOUR HANDS ON YOUR HIPS AND SAY "UMMMMMMMMMMM
UM. IT SHO' IS GOOD TO BE HOME"!!!

THE KITCHEN IS HOME, YA'LL. CHARLIE AND CHESTER, YOU ARE BACK IN
THE KITCHEN THIS WEEK. AND I HOPE YOU HAVE COME INTO THIS PLACE,
AND DO THE SAAAAAME THING: OPEN UP EVERY POT AND PAN, LOOK
INTO EVERY SMILE AND JOYFUL TEAR, FEEL EVERY HUG AND KISS, PUT YOUR
HANDS ON YOUR HIPS, TURN AROUND AND SHOUT : "UMMMMMMMMMMM UM.
IT'S SHO GOOD TO BE HOME"!!!

HOME IS JUST LIKE THE KITCHEN, YA'LL. [IT'S WHERE THE
HEART IS.] IT'S WHERE THE MEMORIES ARE. IT'S A PLACE OF
WARMTH. IT'S A PLACE OF GOOD FEELINGS....WHERE YOU COULD BE
ARGUING AND HOLLERING ONE MINUTE AND NODDIN' OFF TO SLEEP THE
NEXT. THE KITCHEN IS A PLACE TO EAT AND SHARE,
DON'T YOU KNOW. ...BUT IN A MORE INTIMATE WAY THAN ANYWHERE
ELSE. IT IS ALSO THE PLACE WHERE YOU CAN TAKE CARE OF FAMILY
BUSINESS. OLD WOUNDS ARE HEALED. SOME "I'M SORRY'S" AND SOME
"CHILD, YOU KNOW I STILL LOVE YOU'S" ARE
EXCHANGED.....AND THEN SOMEBODY HOLLERS: "WOULD YOU
PLEASE PASS ME SOME CORNBREAD TO GO WITH THESE GREENS??"!

CHARLIE AND CHESTER, YOU'RE BACK IN THE KITCHEN NOW.

DOESN'T HAVE TO GET AS DRESSED UP AS SHE DID LAST WEEK. - MARQUETA

DOESN'T HAVE TO PUT ON AS MANY AIRS. KERMIT JR CAN START BACK

INSTIGATING ARGUMENTS. YOU'RE BACK IN THE KITCHEN NOW!!!!

YOU CAN BE YOURSELVES. SIT BACK. RELAX. DON'T COME IN HERE

ACTING FUNNY NOW. LAST WEEK WAS THE DINING ROOM; BUT THIS IS THE KITCHEN. IN THE DINING ROOM YOU CAN BE ANYBODY YOU WANT. BUT HERE IN THE KITCHEN YOU'RE LIABLE TO HEAR MOMMA OR SOMEBODY TELL YOU: "CHILD, YOU BETTA BE WHAT YOU IS AND NOT WHAT YOU AIN'T. 'CAUSE IF YOU AIN'T WHAT YOU IS, THEN YOU IS WHAT YOU AIN'T." Understand?

HOME IS A PLACE OF REWARD AND RECOGNITION. YOU ARE GIVEN CREDIT AT HOME. [Now, I know you're thinking "No, I'm not either. 'A prophet is never recognized at home. The bible tells you that.' But, wait a minute...I'm not talking about nosy neighbors. I am talking about family when I say "home". I know it's not easy to prove yourself. But, think about it, people out there will give you credit for nothing. They will recognize you for something you never did! But at home, you've got to prove yourself.....You can't pull that at home. You have got to DO something to get a homecoming parade!]

YOU SEE, HOME IS NOT A PLACE OF EMPTY HONORS. HOME IS A PLACE OF TRUTH. AND TRUTH IS ITS OWN HONOR....IT'S OWN REWARD. 'YOU CAN BE 'MISS THANG' AND 'MR BIG STUFF' OUT THERE. BUT, WHEN YOU COME HOME, SOMEBODY IS GONNA TELL YOU ABOUT YOUR BAD ATTITUDE AND YOUR POOR POSTURE. SOMEBODY'S GONNA REMIND YOU THAT THE 'HIGHER YOU GET, THE MORE YOUR BEHIND SHOWS".

THEY'RE GONNA SAY SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR BEHAVIOR.....THEY MAY

EVEN TELL YOU YOUR BREATH IS BAD! [hello!?!]

BUT, IF YOU HAVE LIVED IN TRUTH AND INTEGRITY "OUT THERE"

-----IF YOU HAVE GOTTEN YOUR HONOR THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY:

EARNED IT-----THEN YOU CAN COME HOME. OTHERWISE, STAY

AWAY!!!!!!

-----II.-----

CAN I SAY JUST A LITTLE BIT MORE ABOUT "HOME"?

BUT I WANT TO EXPAND THIS NOTION FOR YOU THOUGH NOW. I WANT THE

IDEA OF "HOME" TO SINK IN JUST A LITTLE MORE.....I WANT YOU

TO BRING IT TO ANOTHER LEVEL.....MAKE IT INTO A METAPHOR, A

SIMILE, AN IMAGE.

[And, if you didn't study about them in class, too bad.]

RIGHT NOW, I WANT TO TALK ABOUT HOME IN A HIGHER AND MORE PROFOUND

SENSE.....IF I HAD TO BREAK IT DOWN

FOR YOU, I'D SAY THIS: HOME IS FOUR THINGS FOR A NEWLY ORDAINED

BLACK PRIEST. 1. HOME IS YOU. 2. HOME IS A DREAM.

3. HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS. 4. HOME IS YOUR FATHER'S

HOUSE

[repeat]

CHARLIE AND CHESTER, TO TRULY COME HOME, YOU HAVE TO TAKE
A CLOSE LOOK AT THE "MAN IN THE MIRROR". HOME IS YOU.

YOU'VE GOT TO LOOK AT THE MAN IN THE MIRROR AND FACE UP TO HIM IF
YOU WANT TO COME HOME. YOU'VE GOT TO SEE THE GOOD , THE BAD,
AND THE UGLY. SEE IT, RECOGNIZE IT, HEAR IT, ACCEPT
IT.....AND THEN LOVE YOURSELF ANYWAY!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

AT HOME, YOU'VE GOT TO START WITH THE 'MAN IN THE MIRROR'...'CAUSE
HOME , REALLY, IS JUST ANOTHER WORD FOR YOU!

WHEN YOU COME HOME TO YOU.....WELL, YOU CAN BEGIN. YOU CAN
BEGIN TO LOVE SOMEONE ELSE.... YOU CAN BEGIN TO TEACH SOMEONE
ELSE.....YOU CAN BEGIN TO HEAR SOMEONE ELSE. YOU MIGHT EVEN BE ABLE
TO PREACH A TAD OR TWO. COME HOME TO THE MAN IN THE
MIRROR, YA'LL.....COME HOME TO YOU! 'CAUSE THERE'S NO
PLACE LIKE HOME!

CHESTER AND CHARLIE, HOME IS A ---secondly---PLACE WHERE DREAMS
CAN GROW; IT IS THE PLACE WHERE YOU CAN PLAN AND BE AMBITIOUS
FOR YOURSELF. IT IS THE PLACE WHERE YOU CAN TELL EVERYBODY AROUND THE

KITCHEN TABLE WHAT YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP ...AND NOT BE PUT
DOWN FOR IT. HOME IS THE PLACE WHERE YOU ARE
EXPECTED TO DREAM. FOR YOU ONLY DREAM ABOUT SOMETHING FOR WHICH
YOU CARE. SO HOME MEANS THAT YOU HAVE PERMISSION TO BUILD
SOMETHING FOR YOURSELF.....AND TO LEAVE SOMETHING FOR OTHERS
AFTER YOU'RE GONE. IT'S THE PLACE WHERE YOU CAN FANTASIZE TO
YOUR HEART'S CONTENT....AND THEN SPEAK THAT FANTASY OUT LOUD.
THAT'S HOME TOO.....'CAUSE HOME IS A DREAM. AND THERE'S NO
PLACE LIKE 'HOME'.

TWINS, HOME IS---thirdly--- A PLACE OF THE HEART.....HOME
IS WHERE THE HEART IS. THERE'S NO PLACE AT HOME FOR THE
HEARTLESS. THEY'RE NOT WELCOME HERE.
HAVING A HEART HAS TWO MEANINGS: IT MEANS BEING IN LOVE. AND IT
MEANS BEING ON FIRE."COMPASSSION" AND "PASSION".

I DON'T SEE HOW A MAN WHO HAS TASTED THE GOODNESS OF THE
LORD CAN BE ANYTHING BUT "IN LOVE". I'M TALKING ROMANCE
HERE....LOVE AFFAIR.....NATIONAL ENQUIRER STUFF.....STUFF THEY

WHISPER ABOUT IN THE CHOIR LOFT. ROMEO AND JULIET LOVE.

SAILING.

COMPASSION IS BEING IN LOVE. AND ISN'T BEING IN LOVE

BEAUTIFUL? [Somebody needs to say 'amen' now!] I'M NOT GOING TO

ASK YOU TO TELL YOUR BUSINESS ON WHETHER OR NOT YOU WERE EVER IN

LOVE BEFORE. IF YOU HAVE NEVER BEEN, LET GO AND TRY IT FOR

ONCE.....YOU MIGHT LIKE IT. IF YOU HAVE BEEN , THEN YOU DON'T

NEED TO BE TOLD. IF YOU'RE NOT SURE, YOU'D BETTER LISTEN.

BEING IN LOVE IS LIKE MEAT GOING THROUGH TENDERIZING AND

FLAVORING. IT CHANGES YOUR 'TEXTURE'. IT MAKES YOU WEAK.

IT MAKES YOU INTERESTING. IT PUTS A SKIP INTO

YOUR STEP AND A LILT INTO YOUR CONVERSATION. PEOPLE IN LOVE

ARE NEVER, EVER BORING. IN FACT, THEY ARE FASCINATING!

WHEN YOU LOOK AT THEM YOU HAVE TO BE JUST A LITTLE BIT ENVIOUS.

IN FACT, MOST OF US MAKE OURSELVES FEEL BETTER BY SAYING : 'OH

,NEVER MIND, IT'LL WEAR OFF IN A WHILE."

OH THAT WE COULD BE IN LOVE WITH THE LORD!!!! OH THAT HE

COULD BE OUR LOVER..... OH THAT PEOPLE WOULD BE ENTHRALLED AND

FASCINATED WHEN WE SPOKE OF HIM. !!!!

THE WAY SOME OF US PRIESTS AND RELIGIOUS TALK ABOUT THE LORD YOU
WOULD THINK THAT WE WERE DESCRIBING AN ENEMY INSTEAD OF A
BELOVED!!!

AND, OH, IF ONLY WE COULD BE IN LOVE WITH OUR
PEOPLE.....GOD'S PEOPLE, OUR BLACK PEOPLE. IF ONLY WE WOULD
HAVE A HEART FOR THEM ...OFFER THEM THE UNDERSTANDING AND THE
PATIENCE THAT WE OFFER OUR LOVER.GIVE THEM THE SAME BENEFIT
OF THE DOUBT WE GIVE OUR LOVER.REFUSE TO "BOX" THEM INTO
SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL STEREOTYPES, LIKE WE WOULD A LOVER...
CHALLENGE THEM TO BE THE BEST THEY CAN BE...JUST LIKE WE DO A
LOVER... AND BE CONSTANTLY SURPRISED AND AMAZED BY THEM,
LIKE WE ARE A LOVER.

HOW EXCITING MINISTRY WOULD BE.....! ...TO HAVE TWO
LOVERS INSTEAD OF JUST ONE: THE LORD, AND HIS PEOPLE.
AND THE WORLD WOULD KNOW IT TOO. PEOPLE CAN ALWAYS TELL WHEN
YOU'RE IN LOVE. IT ATTRACTS THEM TO YOU.
MORE THAN THAT, IT ATTRACTS THEM TO YOUR LOVER! IT MAKES YOUR

LOVER LOOK GOOD. IT MAKES PEOPLE STOP AND STARE AND WONDER AND
BE CURIOUS AND, PERHAPS, EVEN FALL IN LOVE THEMSELVES!
QUIT LECTURING THE FOLK AND HARD-SELLING THE FOLKS ON THE LORD;
QUIT TRYING TO CONVINCING THEM TO BECOME CHRISTIANS. JUST FALL IN
LOVE!!! GIVE THEM YOUR HEART! THEN YOU'LL BE HOME.
AND, GUESS WHAT, THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME.

CHESTER, CHARLIE : CATCH THE FIRE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT!

SET YOUR HEART OF FIRE WITH THE WORD THAT YOU HAVE BEEN CALLED
TO PREACH.

CATCH A "PASSION" FOR THE WORD OF GOD !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

I KNOW YOU HEAR ABOUT JEREMIAH.....HE SAID THERE WAS A FIRE
CAUGHT ALL UP IN HIS BONES. AND, IF HE DIDN'T PREACH THE WORD
OF GOD, HE WOULD JUST BUST WIDE OPEN. [TALKING 'BOUT FIRE.]

I KNOW YA'LL HEARD ABOUT PAUL.....THE FIRE INSIDE HIM TOLD HIM
THAT IF HE DIDN'T PREACH THE GOSPEL, HE WOULD BE RUINED! [FIRE,
YALL!!!]

AND I JUST KNOW YA'LL HEARD ABOUT SOMEBODY NAMED JESUS WHO SAID THAT
HE HAD A "BAPTISM" TO ENDURE. HE WAS SPEAKING OF THE BAPTISM OF
THE HOLY SPIRIT..... THIS IS NOT A WATER BAPTISM THAT QUENCHES
YOUR ENTHUSIASM AND SPOILS YOUR GOOD TIME. THIS IS A FIRE
BAPTISM THAT SET YOU A-BURNIN' !!!!!!!!! [FIRE, CHURCH!]

NOW, IF SOME OF YOU STILL DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING
ABOUT, SOME OF OUR OLD ANCESTORS BROKE THAT FIRE DOWN FOR
US [just like they have always done]. THEY USE TO SING ABOUT
WHAT HAPPENS TO SOMEBODY WHEN THEY CATCH THE FIRE :

SAID I WADN'T GONE TELL NOBODY, BUT I COULDN'T KEEP IT
TO MYSELF [repeat 2x] WHAT THE LORD HAS DONE FOR
ME!!!!!!

HALLELUJAH! I KNOW YOU ALL HEARD ABOUT THAT FIRE DIDN'T YOU?
!!

COKE WILL TELL YOU TO 'CATCH THE WAVE'; BUT I'M

TELLING YOU TO CATCH THE FIRE!

PETER MUST HAVE HAD IT. WHY ELSE IN THE WORLD WOULD HE RISK HIS
LIFE TO STAND UP BEFORE THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES AND UNBELIEVERS

AND BE SO BOLD AS TO SAY THAT HE KNEW OF "NO OTHER NAME IN THE
HEAVENS, ON THE EARTH, OR UNDER THE EARTH BY WHICH WE CAN BE
SAVED OTHER THAN THE NAME OF JESUS. AND THEN, IT GOT
NEXT TO HIM SO MUCH THAT HE JUST HAD TO TELL THEM HOW THEY HAD
REJECTED THAT SALVATION BY REJECTING THE "STONE", THE
STONE WHICH HAS NOW BECOME A CONERSTONE, A ROCK IN A WEARY
LAND, A HIGH REFUGE IN THE TIME OF TROUBLE, A STRONG SHELTER
IN THE STORMY BLAST.

WE NEED TO BE ON FIRE LIKE THAT.

DR KING MUST HAVE HAD IT. WHY ELSE WOULD HE DREAM AND AGONIZE
AND BLEED FOR A PEOPLE AND A TRUTH THAT MARCHES ON?

[OPTIONAL:

He'd think out loud for them sometimes and ask: "Shall we permit
adverse winds to overwhelm us as we journey across life's mighty
Atlantic....or will our inner spiritual engines sustain us in
spite of the winds? Our refusal to be stopped, our 'courage to
be,' our determination to go on 'in spite of'....reveal the
divine image within us." / Here passion and compassion meet,
and meet well.]

WE NEED TO BE ON FIRE LIKE JEREMIAH OR A PAUL.....LIKE A
RUTH AND A MARY. WE NEED TO CATCH THE FIRE WITH A JIM LYKE AND
JOE FRANCIS AND A SR THEA AND A SR PAT HALEY. WE NEED TO BE ON
FIRE WITH A FR AL MCKNIGHT AND A JESSE JACKSON. WE NEED TO

BURN WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT IN A ED DELEANAY AND AN ARNOLD JANSSEN.

[I could go on.]

BE SO ON FIRE THAT WE COULD SAY WITH JESUS: IF WE DON'T SPEAK

OUT THE FREEDOM AND THE LIBERATION AND THE RECONCILING POWER OF

OUR LOVING AND MERCIFUL FATHER, LORD " THE VERY ROCKS AND

STONES WILL CRY OUT " !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

CHARLES AND CHESTER, WERE YOU PERHAPS/MAYBE TALKING ABOUT
THAT FIRE OF THE HOLY GHOST WHEN---ON YOUR ORDINATION CARDS---

YOU PROCLAIMED TO US:

WE WILL NOT HIDE THEM FROM THEIR CHILDREN...WE WILL
TELL THE NEXT GENERATION THE PRAISEWORTHY DEEDS OF THE
LORD, HIS POWER AND THE WONDERS HE HAS DONE.[Ps.78:3-4]

ARE YOU TRYING TO TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT THAT FIRE?

ARE YOU TRYING TO TELL THE CHILDREN-----THE WORLD-----

SOMETHING ABOUT THAT FIRE? WELL, IF YOU ARE, THEN I ONLY

HAVE ONE THING TO SAY TO YOU: TELL THEM !!!!!!!

TELL THE WORLD ABOUT WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR YOU AND YOUR BROTHER!

TELL THE WORLD OF HIS WONDERS AND LOVE.....TELL THEM!

TELL THE CHILDREN! TELL THEM WHERE THERE 'HOME' LIES.

TELL THEM THAT THEIR HISTORY BEGAN IN A PYRAMID, NOT A
PLANTATION.

TELL THEM THEIR SUCCESS BEGINS IN HOPE AND SCHOOL, NOT DOPE AND
POOL.

TELL THEM THAT THEIR DESTINY LIES IN A HEAVENLY ROLL, NOT A
WELFARE ROLL. TELL THEM, CHARLIE AND CHESTER!!!!

TELL THE CHILDREN SOMETHING!

TELL THE PEOPLE, CHESTER. TELL THEM CHARLIE THAT THEY HAD
BETTER STAND TOGETHER FOR SOMETHING OR FALL ALONE FOR ANYTHING!

TELL THEM ABOUT THEIR "SOAP OPERA" LIVES. SO OFTEN WE THE
YOUNG AND THE RESTLESS STAND OUT ON THE EDGE OF NIGHT WITH OUR
MINDS IN DALLAS AND OUR BODIES IN GENERAL HOSPITAL. BUT YOU
TELL THEM, FR. CHARLES AND CHESTER, THAT UNLESS ALL MY CHILDREN
START SEARCHIN' FOR TOMMORROW WITH JESUS AS THEIR GUIDING LIGHT,
THEY WON'T EVEN HAVE A RYAN'S HOPE OF FINDING ANOTHER WORLD!!!!

TELL THEM, YALL! GO AHEAD AND TELL THEM!!

[.....SOMETHING ABOUT THE LILLY OF THE VALLEY AND THE BRIGHT
AND MORNING STAR...BE SOMEBODY WHO WANTS TO TELL EVERYBODY ABOUT

A "SOMEBODY" WHO CAN SAVE ANYBODY.....ABOUT A FRIEND WHO
IS ALWAYS THERE TO CARE AND BEAR AND SHARE. TELL THEM
PLEASE!!]

CHESTER AND CHARLIE, HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS.....A HEART IN
LOVE, A HEART ON FIRE. A HEART THAT CAN'T BE STILL...SAID
IT WADN'T GONE TELL NOBODY, BUT JUST COULDN'T KEEP IT TO ITSELF!

AND, FINALLY, TO BE HOME IS TO BE A CHILD OF GOD.
IT'S AS SIMPLE AS THAT.

SOMEWHERE I READ:

DEARLY BELOVED, WE ARE GOD'S CHILDREN RIGHT NOW; WHAT
WE SHALL LATER BE HAS NOT COME TO LIGHT.

I WONDER IF YOU HEARD THAT? WE ARE ALREADY GOD'S CHILDREN!

WE ARE ALREADY LEGITIMATE. WE DON'T NEED ANOTHER NAME ...OR
TITLE....OR HONOR.....OR ANYTHING. WE DON'T NEED TO ACHIEVE OR
SUCCEED OR OVERCOME!!! WE HAVE ALREADY OVERCOME.....AND
SUCCEEDED....AND WON THE VICTORY IN THE CROSS AND RESURRECTION

OF JESUS CHRIST. WE ARE ROYALTY. ...LANDED
GENTRY....PROPERTY OWNERS.....

I JUST WISH WE COULD BE ----listen to me---"AT HOME"

WITH THAT !!!!!!! AT HOME WITH OUR FATHER...AT HOME IS HIS
HOUSE.

SO OFTEN WE CHRISTIANS RELINQUISH OUR HERITAGE AND BIRTHRIGHT.

WE GIVE THIS WORLD OVER TO THOSE WHO ARE THE LAST PEOPLE TO BE
OVER ANYTHING [...WHY? BECAUSE THEY HAVE BECOME BLIND AND
CONFUSED WITH SIN AND DISBELIEF AND BAD HABIT.

WE CALL THEM "WORLDY".....BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN THAT THEY REALLY
KNOW THE WORLD OR UNDERSTAND IT OR HAVE CARE FOR IT.] THEY
JUST LIVE IN THIS WORLD!!!!

ONLY THOSE THAT KNOW THE CREATOR CAN KNOW THE CREATURE.

ONLY THOSE THAT KNOW THE DREAMER CAN SHARE THE DREAM.

ONLY THOSE THAT HAVE BEEN CALLED CAN ANSWER.

I'M SICK AND TIRED---how about you--- OF CHRISTIANS COPPING OUT
AND LEAVING THIS WORLD TO THE UNSAVED AND UNCHOSEN.

PLEASE DON'T GIVE UP YOUR BIRTHRIGHT IN THIS WORLD !

THIS IS OUR FATHERS HOUSE.

IN OUR FATHER'S HOUSE WE ARE THE BIG SHOTS & THE MISS THANGS,

WE ARE THE CARETAKERS AND STEWARDS OF THE KINGDOM.

IT WAS MADE FOR US...THEREFORE, WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR IT, AND TO

IT!!!! IT'S OUR HOME!!!! AND, WHEN THE LORD SHALL COME

BACK, HE 'LL EXPECT THE REDEEMED OF THE LORD TO STAND UP AND

SAY SO.

[SO TURN TO SOMEBODY AND SAY:

"I'M A BIG SHOT IN THE LORD.

WHEREVER I GO,

WHATEVER I DO,

I KNOW THAT THIS IS MY FATHER'S HOUSE!

NOBODY! ...

BUT NOBODY!! ...

IS GONNA TAKE MY HOME FROM ME!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

[Somebody needs to say amen...]

CHARLIE AND CHESTER, YOU'RE HOME.

AND RIGHT NOW YOU NEED TO BE AWARE OF THE VOICE OF THE

SHEPHERD. YOU NEED TO KNOW IT WHEN IT CALLS TO YOU.

YOU NEED TO TRUST AND BE COMFORTED BY IT. 'CAUSE TO HEAR HIS

VOICE IS TO BE HOME.

I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD. THE GOOD SHEPHERD LAYS DOWN
HIS LIFE FOR HIS SHEEP. [THE GOOD SHEPHERD] KNOWS HIS
SHEEP AND THEY KNOW HIM. THEY KNOW ME IN THE SAME WAY
THAT MY FATHER KNOWS ME AND I KNOW HIM. AND FOR THESE
SHEEP I WILL GIVE MY LIFE. ...NO ONE TAKES IT FROM
ME; I LAY IT DOWN FREELY.

TO HEAR THAT MESSAGE IS TO KNOW THAT NOBODY CAN BRING YOU DOWN

CHESTER AND CHARLIE. TO HEAR THAT VOICE AND TO CLAIM IT AS YOUR

SHEPHERD'S IS TO BELONG.....TO BE A PART OF SOMETHING. IT IS TO

BE IN CONTROL OF YOUR LIFE BECAUSE SOMEBODY IS GUIDING AND

STEERING YOUR SHIP. IT IS TO HAVE A STRONGHOLD AND A HEALING

TOUCH....FOR YOURSELF.....AND FOR THOSE WHOM YOU WILL SERVE.

THE LORD'S VOICE IS TRULY "HOME" , MY BROTHERS.

-----conclusion-----

HOME?.....I'M TALKING ABOUT MY FATHER'S HOUSE!

NO MORE TEARS AT HOME, YA'LL ...IN YOUR FATHER'S HOUSE.

NO MORE HEARTACHES AND ENEMIES AND RENT.

I'M TALKIN' ABOUT YOUR FATHER'S HOUSE.

A HOME WHERE THE "WICKED WILL CEASE FROM TROUBLIN' ,

AND THE RIGHTEOUS WILL BE AT REST".

A HOME WHERE I'LL SEE MY JESUS.

HE'LL WIPE THE TEAR AS IT COMES TO YOUR EYE....AND WHEN YOU SAY

'JUST THANK YOU LORD' HE'LL SAY WHY?

I'M TALKING ABOUT YOUR FATHER'S HOUSE....

YOUR "HOME"!!!!...

WELCOME,

'CAUSE...

CAN I GET A WITNESS: THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME!

[OPTIONAL SONGS:

"Never Grow Old"

"I'll Fly Away" .]

THE FIRST SOLEMN LITURGY OF THANKSGIVING
OF FATHER RONALD BROUSSARD

THE CHURCH OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY
LAFAYETTE, LOUISIANA
MAY 23, 1988
2:00 P.M.

ACTS 2:1-11
I CORINTHIANS 12:3-7;12-13
JOHN 20:19-23

"TO EACH PERSON THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SPIRIT
IS GIVEN FOR THE COMMON GOOD."
I CORINTHIANS 12:13

INTRODUCTION

- A. I HAVE DECIDED TO ENTITLE THIS HOMILY, "EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT RON BROUSSARD BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK!"
- B. THE STORY OF FATHER HILARY WIEMELS - "I GUESS THE LORD HAS A HOLD ON ME!"
- I. TODAY, IN THIS PENTECOST LITURGY, WE ALL ACKNOWLEDGE THE FACT THAT BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT GOD HAS A "HOLD" ON ALL OF US: EACH PERSON HERE CAN AFFIRM WITH CONVICTION, "I GUESS, NO (AS THE SPIRITUAL PUTS IT) - I KNOW - THE LORD HAS A HOLD ON ME!"
- A. TODAY, ON THIS PENTECOST SUNDAY, YOU AND I ACKNOWLEDGE THE ABUNDANT GIFTS WITHIN THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY: "DIFFERENT GIFTS BUT SAME SPIRIT; DIFFERENT MINISTRIES BUT THE SAME LORD; DIFFERENT WORKS BUT THE SAME GOD" - WHO, BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, "ACCOMPLISHES ALL OF THEM IN EVERYONE."
- B. BY OUR VERY GIFTS THE SPIRIT HAS A "HOLD" ON US- FOR THE SAKE OF THE COMMON GOOD.
EVERY GIFT - A "BALM IN GILEAD."
EVERY GIFT - A NEW INFUSION OF ENERGY, "TO MAKE THE

WOUNDED WHOLE."

EVERY GIFT - A BLESSING "TO HEAL THE SIN SICK SOUL."

EVERY GIFT - "A STRONG DRIVING WIND," 'FALLING AFRESH
ON ME.'

EVERY GIFT - "TONGUES OF FIRE," 'MELTING ME.'

EVERY GIFT - A "BOLD PROCLAMATION," 'FILLING ME.'

EVERY GIFT - THE "SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD," 'USING
ME.'

- C. YES, THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT GOD HAS A "HOLD" ON EACH
AND EVERYONE OF US, BECAUSE GOD IS THE SOURCE, PURPOSE
AND END OF EVERY GIFT. THAT'S WHY WE SING, "EVERYTIME
I FEEL THE SPIRIT MOVIN' IN MY HEART I WILL PRAY"!

II. "TO EACH PERSON THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SPIRIT IS GIVEN FOR
THE COMMON GOOD."

- A. SOMETIMES, FOR THE SAKE OF THE BODY, GOD REACHES INTO
THE POOL OF CHURCH TALENT AND DRAWS OUT A PARTICULAR
PERSON, A SPECIFIC GENIUS, A GIFTED MAN TO ORDAIN FOR
MINISTRY AND TO PERFORM UNIQUE AND SPECIAL FUNCTIONS TO
BUILD UP THE BODY OF CHRIST IN LOVE. SAYS GOD, "I
DON'T WANT TO HEAR THIS, 'I'M TOO YOUNG TALK.' ALL
I WANT TO HEAR IS - "HERE I AM, LORD, SEND ME!" "TAKE
HOLD OF ME!"

- B. THUS, CAME RON BROUSSARD OUT THE OBSCURITY OF
LAFAYETTE, LOUISIANA. GOD SAID, "I HAVE CALLED YOU BY
NAME." RESPONDED RON:

OPENING UP MY HANDS TO THE WORLD YOU GAVE ME;

REACHING OUT MY ARMS TO THE LORD AND HIS WONDERS!
ALL THAT I AM I KNOW IT'S BECAUSE OF YOU,
ALL THAT I AM I LIFT UP TO YOU.

C. DEAR FRIENDS, BEHIND RON'S SONG IS THE STORY OF HIS
LIFE'S JOURNEY. HE WRITES:

WHEN I REFLECT IN ME,
I SEE THE EMPTINESS WHICH I ONCE FELT.

THE TIME OF "EMPTINESS," THE EXPERIENCE OF A VOID SO BLANK THAT
HE COULD FIND NOTHING NOBLE IN HIS SOUL AND, WORSE, HE KNEW NOT
HOW TO FILL THE VOID. IT WAS HIS PERIOD OF THE "DARK NIGHT OF
THE SOUL," SEARCHING BUT NOT KNOWING WHERE TO FIND, CRYING
WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING THE REASONS FOR IT, CRINGING FROM PAIN AND
DISCOVERING NOT THE SOURCE. IT WAS, SO TO SPEAK, "THE EVENING OF
THAT FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK" ALL OVER AGAIN, WITH THE "FEAR" AND
"LOCKED DOORS," SO THAT NEITHER GOD NOR ANYONE COULD ENTER THE
UPPER ROOM OF HIS HEART - UNTIL THE HOLY SPIRIT WOULD BREATHE ON
HIM:

OH MOST BLESSED LIGHT DIVINE,
SHINE WITHIN THIS HEART OF MINE,
AND MY INMOST BEING FILL!
WHERE YOU ARE NOT, MAN HAS NAUGHT,
NOTHING GOOD IN DEED OR THOUGHT,
NOTHING FREE FROM TAINT OR ILL.

D. THE SONG GOES ON, AND RON RECALLS THE GIFT OF
FRIENDSHIP:

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FOR IN REACHING OUT
YOU SENT ME SO MANY HEARTS
TO SHARE IN MY LIFE.

"PEACE BE WITH YOU," JESUS SAID TO THE DISCIPLES. THE EVANGELIST ADDS, "AND HE SHOWED THEM HIS HANDS AND HIS SIDE." LIKE JESUS, THE FRIEND IS ONE WHO BOTH WISHES YOU PEACE AND ALSO SHOWS AND SHARES THE WOUNDS OF LIFE'S JOURNEY. AND, WHEN SUCH FRIENDS ARE SPIRIT-FILLED, SORROWS ARE DIVIDED, JOYS DOUBLED; AND, DIVINE LIGHT ENTERS THE SOUL:

YOU, OF COMFORTERS THE BEST;
YOU, THE SOUL'S MOST WELCOME GUEST;
SWEET REFRESHMENT HERE BELOW;
IN OUR LABOR, REST MOST SWEET;
GRATEFUL COOLNESS IN THE HEAT;
SOLACE IN THE MIDST OF WOE.

E. AND NOW I THANK YOU, LORD, (CONTINUES RON)
FOR ALL YOU HAVE DONE FOR ME.
AND NOW I THANK YOU, LORD,
FOR THE SUNSHINE AND THE RAIN.

SO, CONCLUDES RON'S COMPOSITION, SHARING WITH US HIS PROFOUND EXPERIENCE OF GRATITUDE TO GOD. AFTER ALL, WHEN HE LOOKS BACK ON LIFE AND SEES ALL THE WRONG ROADS HE COULD HAVE TRAVELED AND RECOGNIZES THE QUAGMIRES OF DESTRUCTION AND PITFALLS OF DESOLATION THAT COULD HAVE MARKED HIS LIFE IRREVERSIBLY, WHAT ELSE COULD RON SAY BUT, "AND NOW I THANK YOU, LORD."

RON, ONE MIGHT ADD THAT, WHEN YOU COMPOSED THIS SONG, THE

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HOLY SPIRIT HAD DESCENDED UPON YOU "LIKE A DOVE." THIS IS A NEW DAY, HOWEVER. NOW IT IS TIME TO ADD SOME NEW VERSES TO THAT SONG, TO BRING THE SPIRIT UP TO DATE ON YOUR LIFE, AND TO SEEK HIS GUIDANCE AGAIN AS YOU EMBARK UPON PRIESTLY LIFE AND SERVICE. TODAY, THEN, I WANT TO HELP YOU TO COMPOSE THOSE NEW VERSES, SO THAT THE RON "BEFORE PRIESTHOOD" MIGHT SMOOTHLY MOVE TO THE FATHER RON "AFTER PRIESTHOOD." IN THE PROCESS, I HOPE I SHARE SOMETHING ALL OF US CAN PONDER.

WHEN YOU SAID "YES" TO GOD FOR PRIESTHOOD, RON, YOU SAID "YES" TO PEACE, BUT ALSO "YES" TO THE HANDS AND SIDE; "YES" TO THE CROWN, BUT ALSO "YES" TO THE CROSS; "YES" TO THE GIFT, BUT ALSO "YES" TO THE TASK, "YES" TO THE OPEN DOORS BUT ALSO "YES" TO THE LOCKED DOORS.

RON, PRIESTHOOD (AND LIFE) - IS NOT MEANT TO BE EASY, AND, I ASSURE YOU, IT WILL NOT BE. BUT, I ASSURE YOU ALSO - PRIESTHOOD WILL ALWAYS BE FULL OF MEANING. THOUGH THERE WILL BE THE PROVERBIAL TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS, YOU WILL NOT HAVE AN UNHAPPY MOMENT.

YOU SEE, RON, UNHAPPINESS RESULTS NOT FROM STRUGGLE AND STRESS, OR STRAIN AND STAIN. UNHAPPINESS OCCURS WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR LIFE, WHEN YOU ARE SO STRANGLERED BY THE WEB OF LIFE'S QUESTIONS AND INCONSISTENCIES THAT YOU ASK WITH SHAKESPEARE'S HAMLET,

IS LIFE SO MUCH SOUND AND FURY SIGNIFYING NOTHING,
OR, IS IT A TALE TOLD BY AN IDIOT?

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HAPPINESS IS NOT AN END IN ITSELF. IT IS A BY-PRODUCT OF A RELATIONSHIP. HAPPINESS RESULTS FROM A SENSE OF FOCUS, DIRECTION, PURPOSE, AND MEANING IN LIFE. HAPPINESS IS A PRODUCT OF BELIEVING IN SOMEONE AND HAVING UNALTERABLE CONVICTIONS ABOUT SOME THINGS. HAPPINESS RESULTS FROM HAVING CLEAR VALUES BY WHICH TO LIVE AND CLEAR STANDARDS BY WHICH TO CRITIQUE ONESELF. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO BE AN UNHAPPY PRIEST, RON, BECAUSE PRIESTHOOD HAS ALL THIS - AND MORE.

PRIESTHOOD, RON, IS ABOUT LIFE, DIVINE LIFE AND HUMAN LIFE; IT IS ABOUT GRACE, SAVING GRACE AND RENEWING GRACE; IT IS ABOUT WISDOM, ILLUMINATING WISDOM AND PASTORAL WISDOM.

PRIESTHOOD IS ABOUT COMMUNITY, BUILDING COMMUNITY AND SUSTAINING COMMUNITY; IT IS ABOUT RECONCILIATION, FORGIVING RECONCILIATION AND REDEEMING RECONCILIATION.

PRIESTHOOD IS ABOUT WITNESS, EXEMPLARY WITNESS AND SACRIFICIAL WITNESS; IT IS ABOUT INCLUSIVENESS, ALL-EMBRACING INCLUSIVENESS AND WELCOMING INCLUSIVENESS.

PRIESTHOOD IS ABOUT SACRAMENTS AND SACRAMENTAL EMPOWERMENT: SIGNS OF BELONGING, PARTICIPATION, UNITY, COMMUNION, FIDELITY, FORGIVENESS AND SERVICE.

PRIESTHOOD IS ABOUT KINGDOM BUILDING, - "A KINGDOM OF TRUTH AND LIFE, OF HOLINESS AND GRACE, A KINGDOM OF JUSTICE, OF LOVE, AND OF PEACE." (PREFACE OF CHRIST THE KING).

PRIESTHOOD IS ABOUT WHAT MARTIN LUTHER KING WAS WONT TO SAY, "IF YOU DON'T HAVE SOMETHING WORTH DYING FOR, THEN YOU DON'T HAVE SOMETHING WORTH LIVING FOR"; AND, HE LOVED TO QUOTE THE OLD

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SPIRITUAL, "IF I CAN HELP SOMEBODY, THEN MY LIVING WILL NOT BE IN VAIN."

PRIESTHOOD IS ABOUT CRYING, CRAVING, CLAMORING FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, FOR THE DIGNITY OF ALL, FOR THE POOR, MARGINALIZED AND DISENFRANCHISED, FOR FEMALE AND MALE, FOR THE "LITTLE BI-TY BABIES" IN THE WOMB AND OUT OF THE WOMB.

PRIESTHOOD IS ABOUT THE ERADICATION OF SLAVERY FOR YELLOW PEOPLE AND BROWN PEOPLE, BLACK PEOPLE AND WHITE PEOPLE, WOMEN AND MEN, JEWS AND GENTILES, FROM ALL FORMS OF BONDAGE, WHETHER SPIRITUAL OR PHYSICAL: FROM MATERIALISM AND MILITARISM, SEXISM AND RACISM. IT IS ABOUT THE PROCLAMATION OF FREEDOM. AS THE OLD SPIRITUAL PUTS IT, "...AND BEFORE I'LL BE A SLAVE, I'LL BE BURIED IN MY GRAVE AND GO HOME TO MY LORD AND BE FREE."

PRIESTHOOD IS ABOUT JOY IN THE STRUGGLE, BLESSED JOY IN THE ACCOMPLISHMENT, AND ETERNAL JOY WHEN THE LORD SHALL COME AGAIN IN GLORY TO CLAIM THE WORLD IN FULLNESS AND PERFECTION.

PRIESTHOOD IS ABOUT PENTECOST, ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT - ABOUT THE GOD WHO ENNOBLES AND EMPOWERS, ANIMATES AND ACTIVATES, DISCOVERS AND DISSEMINATES.

PRIESTHOOD IS ABOUT FINDING GIFTS AND SHARING THEM, DESTROYING BABEL AND CONSTRUCTING THE CITY OF GOD; IT IS ABOUT BEING A MAN FOR OTHERS, AN INSTRUMENT OF PEACE, AN AGENT FOR HOLINESS, AND ADVOCATE FOR THE POWERLESS, AND A CRITIC OF THE POWERFUL.

SO, YOU SEE, RON, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE FOR YOU TO BE AN UNHAPPY PRIEST. THE PRIEST IS DRUNK IN THE HOLY SPIRIT! A JOY-

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RIDER, A FREEDOM FIGHTER, A JUSTICE BEARER, AND A PEACE-MAKER. OH, YES, NO CROSS, NO CROWN; NO STORY, NO GLORY; NO PUSH, NO PULL; NO TOTAL GIVING TO GOD, NOT TOTAL LIVING FOR GOD. HOW TRUE IT IS, "OPENING UP MY HANDS TO THE WORLD YOU GAVE ME...."

YES, PRIESTHOOD IS ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT. IT'S ABOUT "A NOISE LIKE A STRONG DRIVING WIND, ABOUT TONGUES OF FIRE, ABOUT ASTONISHMENT, UTTER AMAZEMENT, AND THE MARVELS OF GOD." "ALL WERE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT. THEY BEGAN TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES IN FOREIGN TONGUES AND MAKE BOLD PROCLAMATIONS." THIS IS PENTECOST! THIS IS PRIESTHOOD!

YESTERDAY, FATHER BROUSSARD, YOU EXPERIENCED AN EXPLICITLY FRESH AND NEW OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WHEN YOU WERE MARKED WITH THE SACRED CHARACTER OF THE ORDAINED PRIESTHOOD. WHAT A BLESSING FOR YOU TO CELEBRATE THIS PRIESTLY GIFT IN THIS PENTECOSTAL SEASON!

IT SEEMS TO ME THAT, FROM THE CONTEXT OF THE PENTECOST EXPERIENCE, YOU MAY SIFT THREE TASKS FOR YOUR PRIESTLY MINISTRY:

1. FIRST, FROM THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, WHERE EACH ONE FROM THE CROWD HEARD EACH OTHER SPEAKING IN THEIR "OWN NATIVE TONGUE," YOU LEARN THAT YOU ARE TO DISCERN THE GROUNDS FOR UNITY IN THE HUMAN FAMILY. REMEMBER, THE CALL TO UNITY IS A CALL TO PEACE, AND A CALL TO PEACE DEMANDS THE PRESENCE OF JUSTICE- THERE IS NO PEACE WITHOUT JUSTICE.

2. SECONDLY, FROM PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ANCIENT CHURCH OF GOD, AT CORINTH, YOU UNDERSTAND THAT YOU MUST DRAW FORTH THE GIFTS FROM THE PEOPLE OF GOD. WITHOUT THE TALENTS OF THE PEOPLE,

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THE CHURCH IS A DRY LAND WITHOUT WATER. AS A DISCERNER OF GIFTS, YOU BRING FERTILE SOIL AND SOW PLANTS OF RICH COLOR AND VARIETY FOR THE SAKE OF THE KINGDOM.

3. THIRDLY, FROM JOHN'S GOSPEL, IT BECOMES CLEAR THAT AS PRIEST YOU ARE AN AGENT OF RECONCILIATION. THE DOORS OF PEOPLE'S HEARTS AND MINDS CAN ONLY BE UNLOCKED BY THE BREATH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND BY ONE EMPOWERED TO HEAL AND FORGIVE SINS IN THE NAME OF CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH.

FATHER BROUSSARD, "ON THE EVENING OF THAT FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, EVEN THOUGH THE DISCIPLES HAD LOCKED THE DOORS OF THE PLACE WHERE THEY WERE..., JESUS CAME AND STOOD IN THEIR MIDST."

TODAY, ON THE AFTERNOON OF THIS FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, EVEN THOUGH THE DOORS OF OUR HEARTS MAY BE LOCKED, THE OPENING IN OUR MINDS, SHUT, AND THE WINDOWS OF OUR SOULS, CLOSED, YOU PRESIDE AT THIS EUCHARISTIC TABLE, YOU STAND IN OUR MIDST AND FEED US WITH A HOLY FOOD AND DRINK, AND YOU SAY: "PEACE BE WITH YOU. RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT." THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF MARY, QUEEN OF PRIESTS, MAY IT BE SO FOREVER. AMEN!

MOST REVEREND JAMES P. LYKE, O.F.M., PH.D.