



# PRIESTHOOD

*“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth and making it bear and sprout, So will my word be which goes forth from my mouth; It will not return to me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.” - ISAIAH 55:10-11*

## ESTABLISHING THE CONCEPTS

### MAKING A DIFFERENCE

**By Fr. Gerard Francik**

I want to share with you two stories that show why I am a priest and how God continues to confirm his calling to me. Just a few months ago, I received a phone call from a young woman who now lives on the West Coast. She was going to be in town for a few days and wanted to stop by and visit with me. I had no idea why. I didn't even recognize her name, but there I was, a few days later, greeting her and her mother at the door.

She came into my office, and with tears in her eyes recounted the story of the death of her stepfather. Neither she nor her mother had been Catholic, but they remembered my taking care of her father when he was hospitalized and later as he was dying. She said that I had included them so much in the funeral, even though they did not understand all of the rituals. She wanted me to know how grateful she was. I thought that was the end of the conversation.

But then she described how, days later, she and her boyfriend were driving in a car together and had a terrible accident. He was killed. Others blamed her for his death, and in fact, she found herself feeling terribly guilty (even though she was not) and blaming herself. One desperate day, driving through some country roads at very high speeds, she decided to try to find me. I had been transferred to our youth retreat house. Luckily, after she checked with the front office, I appeared and was able to sit and talk with her. She said it took no more than five minutes, but that conversation changed her life. She left there feeling God's presence and peace.

That young woman came back to thank me. She said she thought that priests too frequently are not told how they have helped another in need. I honestly don't remember the conversation that she said changed her life.



Five years ago a couple I married called with great news. I knew that they had wanted children and that, for years, they were unable to conceive. This time the news was different: They were going to have a baby. They had heard from an adoption agency, and they were flying to China to meet their new little girl. They would be there two weeks but wanted to arrange for her baptism when they returned. “Would you be willing to baptize our baby?” the husband asked. “Of course,” I replied. “I would be honored.” I then asked how his parents must feel, since he was an only child and this would be their first grandchild. He said, “Oh, we haven't told them yet. We wanted to tell you first!” I was speechless. One of the most poignant and important moments of life, and they wanted me to be part of it first.

That is why I am still a priest. I am able to walk into the most profound moments in people's lives and make a difference. God confirms his call to me every day by using me to bring his blessings and grace to others in so many ways. Most of the time, I'm not even aware that he is using me, because it is God giving the blessings and grace, not me. And people like these, who cross my path every day, are such a blessing to me personally. Is life as a priest lonely? Not with wonderful people like these!



# PRIESTHOOD

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## ESTABLISHING THE CONCEPTS *continued*

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### Discussion Questions

- How did Fr. Francik make a difference?
- Why does Fr. Francik think that he is able to be part of profound things happening in other people's lives even though he is unaware of it?
- How and why is the vocation of a priest oriented toward being able to "be there" and "make a difference" in many people's lives?

## EXPLORATION

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### VIDEO: "TO BE A PRIEST"

- What are some of the ways that these people discerned (figured out) that God was calling them to the priesthood?
- How is being a priest fulfilling to them?
- In what way is prayer important to a priest?
- How does the scandal of priests affect these priests?
- What role does sacrifice play in the life of a priest?



## REFLECTIVE PRAYER



## PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

*Jesus, meek and humble of heart,  
give all priests Your spirit of humility;  
Jesus, poor and worn out for souls,  
give all priests Your spirit of zeal;  
Jesus, full of patience and mercy for sinners,  
give all priests Your spirit of compassion;  
Jesus, victim for the sins of the world,  
give all priests Your spirit of sacrifice;  
Jesus, lover of the little and the poor,  
give all priests Your spirit of charity.  
Mary, Queen of the Clergy, pray for us;  
and obtain for us numerous and holy  
priests and religious.*

AMEN.

## VOCAL PRAYER

### *The Magnificat*

My soul proclaims  
the greatness of the Lord,  
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior  
for he has looked with favor  
on his lowly servant.  
From this day all generations  
will call me blessed:  
the Almighty has done great things for me,  
and holy is his Name.  
He has mercy on those who fear him  
in every generation.  
He has shown the strength of his arm,  
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.  
He has cast down the mighty  
from their thrones,  
and has lifted up the lowly.  
He has filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich he has sent away empty.  
He has come to the help  
of his servant Israel  
for he remembered his promise of mercy,  
the promise he made to our fathers,  
to Abraham and his children forever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son,  
and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now,  
and will be forever.

AMEN.