

Thank You

As I continue to thank God for His call to the priesthood, I also continue my prayer of thanksgiving for the tremendous and overwhelming outpouring of love and affection last Sunday afternoon. My day began with the celebration of Mass at 9:00 AM. Although it was disappointing not to have a congregation when I celebrated Mass, I was very grateful that we were able to broadcast the Mass. As many would know, in addition to offering the Mass for our parishioners and their loved ones and indeed all God's people, I also especially remembered my parents, Helen and Tom. As I mentioned at the beginning of Mass, it was exactly 40 years ago at that very hour that my parents came to St. Charles Seminary to take me to the Cathedral of Sts. Peter and Paul to be ordained to the priesthood. How fitting it was for my parents to do so. During the formative years of my life, similar to other parents, my parents brought me to church for the Sacrament of Baptism, and then for the Sacrament of Penance, followed by the Sacrament of the Eucharist and then the Sacrament of Confirmation. In the words of the Preface of Mass, "it is right and just" that my parents brought me to church for the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

Throughout the Mass last Sunday morning, I was very conscious of, and grateful for, this most wonderful privilege of celebrating Mass for the past 40 years. I remembered back 40 years ago, and feeling like it was just yesterday, when my parents and brothers and sisters and their spouses and other family members and friends were present for my Ordination and Mass of Thanksgiving. On a personal level, from beginning of the Mass to the end, it was very emotional. As I was announcing the intentions of our Mass, I could feel the emotion rising up and then during the Hymn of Praise at the post communion time, I really felt the emotion of the moment. When Julianna Rifkin, our leader of song, began to sing the beautiful hymn, *Our Lady of Knock*, my heart was flooded with much emotion as I remembered my parents whose love brought me into life and nurtured me to be the man and priest I have become. As I said last Sunday morning after Julianna had finished singing, I thought that I was aware of each of the Mass hymns but I never saw the Hymn, *Our Lady of Knock*, coming! Although it was planned, I was not aware of it. I am so grateful to Julianna for singing so beautifully and I am grateful also to Jean Madden for planning and arranging for Julianna to sing.

Following Mass, there was a very nice breakfast in the rectory. As we were finishing, I was asked to go outside and move down the driveway towards Goble Court. As I was walking, I began to hear the horns blaring and then I saw all the cars and other vehicles in procession beginning to pass by. At first, I was surprised but as the cars and other vehicles continued to pass by, it was truly overwhelming to see and to experience all the joy, affirmation and love. As one parishioner asked me that afternoon, "can you feel the love?" My answer was resounding, "absolutely!"

It was so good to see so many parishioners as well as members of my family on Sunday afternoon. Having not seen our parishioners for the past eight weeks, it was delightful to see and to "briefly" speak with everyone. I am so grateful to everyone for making the effort, especially waiting so long in line to greet me. I thank everyone for the creativity in decorating their cars with signs and words of gratitude and congratulations. I am also grateful for all the cards and gifts which I received.

Although I would have much preferred everyone gathering for Mass and then perhaps gathering on the church lawn or in Monsignor Woods Hall for some refreshments, you made my Anniversary so very special and I am profoundly grateful. It was one which I can relive because it was streamed as well as recorded thanks to Hank Wajda, Chris Thompson, Karen David, Mark Cordero and Mark's sister, Linda Olmo.

Finally, I wish to thank Audrey Wilson for organizing the Parade and special thanks to Betty Brooks and Roger Kean for "traffic control." Thank you, one and all. You all made my 40th Anniversary so very special.

Monsignor Michael P. McCormac, Pastor
Saint Frances Cabrini Catholic Community