

November 10, 2015

Dear friends,

This Sunday I will have been a priest for 35 years. I was ordained a deacon by Bishop Brady, and a priest by Bishop Stevens. I was ordained in Minocqua at Our Lady Queen of the Universe Church because neither of the churches in Minocqua or Eagle River were large enough. At the time, I was an assistant to Fr Roger Wharton, and together we served the Northwoods Missions, consisting of Eagle River, Minocqua, Phelps, Laona, and Manitowish Waters. Two of those were summer missions.

As I look back upon those times, I am reminded how much time I spent in the car visiting people and going from mission to mission. I realize the very act of going, visiting, helped shape me to a ministry of serving. I could not expect people to come to me, I went to them, where they were.

At its very best, the Church is a family of servants, caring for one another, caring for the people in our communities, caring for the world. Often that means going to people, and not expecting them to come to you. In that spirit, I think of the story of Jesus, the love of God which became flesh and dwelt among us. All so one day we might come to Him.

Today, it seems like I am still in the car a lot. I think it goes back to when I was first ordained, and the unspoken yet powerful message that I was ordained to be a servant, and bring the presence of God into people's lives, especially through the ability to celebrate the sacraments with God's people. I'm not sure if I ever heard the message spoken at one time in the form of a teaching, but I give thanks that even if it took 35 years for me to figure out, it seems to be sinking in. And of course I give thanks to all the people in the places I have served for having patience and love for me in learning what it means to be a priest, a servant and a friend.

Fr David