

**Ordination to Priesthood
Reverend Guthrie Dolan
June 3, 2011**

Introduction/Spanish

Es un placer para mí darles la bienvenida a la ordenación del Guthrie Dolan como presbítero al servicio de la Diócesis de Des Moines.

Guthrie ha vivido ocho años de oración, estudio, formación y servicio para poder ser elegido al ministerio del sacerdocio.

Es un día de gozo para la comunidad local conforme marcamos el centenario de nuestra diócesis con enorme gratitud por los beneficios que nos ha dado la providencia de Dios en el pasado así como nos proveerá en el futuro.

Homily/Spanish

Al ser ordenado en este año del centenario de la Diócesis de Des Moines, Guthrie Dolan tiene la fortuna de tener una extensa lista de predecesores que le servirán como excelentes modelos a seguir.

Pienso en el Padre Tom Pfeffer, quien fue párroco de la Parroquia de Visitación. Él fue uno de los primeros en ofrecer una hospitalidad especial a la más reciente ola de inmigrantes Hispánicos, quienes han enriquecido nuestra comunidad diocesana. Él extendió esa bienvenida fundado en el respeto a una vida de fe con raíces en la cultura y el lenguaje. Él ofreció asistencia profunda para permitir que aquellos recién llegados se sintieran en casa en su nueva tierra. Él hizo presente el corazón de Jesús, que tiene cabida para todos.

Este mismo corazón de Jesús tiende a ser aún más accesible por medio de la entrega de Guthrie a Cristo. En su nombre Guthrie será un “esclavo” para aquellos que Él ha llamado al sacerdocio. Sorprendentemente, este llamado, así como el de su Maestro le presenta un futuro de felicidad y una experiencia de gozo que es característica de la vida en el Padre, el Hijo y el Espíritu Santo.

Homily

Being ordained during the Diocese of Des Moines' Centennial year, naturally aligns you, Guthrie, with the stream of priests who have served in the community of Southwest Iowa in the century preceding your ordination. You have hundreds of role models who have adapted to the times in preaching the Gospel of Jesus.

For instance, there is the prominent historical figure of Monsignor Luigi Ligutti. He indigenized the Gospel in his ministry to the farmers of Shelby County – preempting the 1979 voice of Blessed John Paul II at Living History Farms: “Farmers, be Proud.”

Monsignor Ligutti announced a year of favor to the 50 families in Granger at the height of the depression being instrumental in the construction of 50 new livable homes in that community.

Representative of the following era in the U.S. Church when pastors frequently assumed the role of autocratic shepherd is Father Francis B. Ostdiek. He was Pastor of Holy Trinity Parish in Beavertown for 49 years and is legendary for his unbending ways. Beneath the bluster, it is told, there was a heart of gold and a willingness to reach out in compassion to those who were able to tap into it.

In our time, exceptional role models are the five priests who are commemorating their 40th anniversary of ordination which occurred on May 29th in 1971 at Vets auditorium, in Harlan, Iowa. Ken Gross, Wayne Gubbels, Michael Hess, Larry Hoffmann and Jim Polich were bridges between the Church of the 50’s and 60’s and the ecclesial community which evolved after Vatican Council II.

Two common characteristics of their faithful and energetic ministry are:

- 1) A devotion to liturgy especially the Eucharistic liturgy where these priests strive to engage the praying community fully, actively and consciously. They seek to activate the identity of the assembly as God’s priestly people.
- 2) These five also involve their congregation in the total life of the parish by promoting widespread participation. Ownership by the members leads to community building and outreach in a spirit of mission extending far beyond parish boundaries.

Personal generosity and openness to diocesan needs highlight the commitment to the promise of obedience of these jubilarians. Two of them are leaving comfortable circumstances in response to need undertaking new assignments this July. Another, scant months ago, accepted leadership to establish a brand new parish.

Obviously, Guthrie, you inherit a rich legacy of priestly inspiration. The one priesthood in which you are being ordained and which belongs to those who came before you is that of Jesus the Christ – a priesthood beautifully recounted in the Scriptures of this Mass.

At the beginning of his public ministry in Luke 4, Jesus identifies himself with the servant of Yahweh described by the prophet, Isaiah. Jesus is the one who is anointed and filled with God’s spirit. He announces glad tidings of salvation to all – especially the lowly, the brokenhearted, those captives of sin and prisoners of self-centeredness.

In the Easter season scriptures, we note how Jesus imparted this mission to the apostles and his disciples. Those so commissioned are not only to carry out the functions of

ministry which evolved in the Church but are to identify with the person of Jesus in doing so.

Unworthy as they knew themselves to be, these early Church leaders were to stand as a sacrament of Jesus himself to the flocks entrusted to them manifesting the same generosity of service as Jesus. By virtue of their loving commitment to Jesus and the proclamation of the Kingdom, the first priests and all those who follow them became a sign of that kingdom. Marked with the sacred character of ordination – the mission of Jesus is extended in space and time through them and their successors– a mission of truth, peace, justice and love.

Lest you think, Guthrie, that the identity accorded you through ordination is one of prestige and power recall the sobering words of Paul to the Corinthians proclaimed this evening. You are not about focusing on yourself but with your fellow ministers of the word, are to preach as “slaves to those to whom we are sent for the sake of Jesus.”

Further, Paul reminds us that we preach as “earthen vessels.” We are subject to the same weakness as our sisters and brothers in the human family. All the ordained require the understanding and support of the church community and of our family and friends and especially ongoing intimacy with the Lord Jesus.

One might possibly be inclined to conclude, Guthrie, that as you assume the role of ordained priest – as slave and servant – that it would not be the road to personal happiness. After all, you have chosen to forego marriage and the accompanying sexuality for the sake of the kingdom. Moreover, you surrender dimensions of independence by the promise of obedience which you renew this evening to me and my successors for the sake of unity which unity Jesus treasured.

But the actual reality of most priests today, according to Monsignor Stephen Rosetti and survey after survey turns out to be counter-intuitive. Upwards of 90% of priests are happy or very happy. It is not a superficial happiness occasioned by transitory events. Rather, it is the joy of Jesus, a habitual, deeply rooted emotional and psychological state of being which priests experience in their relationship with God. Our God reaches out and relates with a love that is deeply personal and unconditional which love will never allow our personal value or esteem to be eclipsed.

This love serves as the foundation of the life of the priest ordained in the name of Jesus. Through the seven sacraments, through his ministry of compassion and care, through the sacrament of his very person, the priest incarnates this love and opens those to whom he is sent to the experience of God’s Kingdom today. The priest is called to lay down his life in synchronization with Jesus that love may abound. As Jesus derived irrepressible joy from obedience to the Father and coming to be friends with his companions, so joy fills the heart of the priest in continuing that mission.

Guthrie Dolan, the Diocese of Des Moines welcomes you to the presbyterate of our local Church populated by presbyters in earthen vessels and through whom God's love has been communicated generation after generation.

We thank you for generously and bravely responding to God's call. May you come to profoundly know the joy of Jesus which joy is embedded in those who undertake the ministry of priesthood in his name.

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