

Detailed Liturgy Guide for the
First Mass / Mass of Thanksgiving
of Fr. Joseph Jerome (Fr. Joe) Bambenek



Holy Trinity Sunday
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church
Hastings, MN
May 29, 2010 4:30 PM

This guide is intended to help those not familiar with the Catholic Mass to follow along, knowing when to stand, sit & kneel, and what to say. On the day of the Mass, liturgy guides, much less detailed, will be handed out at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church. The present guide should contain all that is in those more basic guides except for the music to two songs (the Gloria & Our Father), which are not included here for copyright reasons.

Prior to Mass, persons should generally kneel or sit in their seats quietly & pray. Catholics typically genuflect (kneel briefly on one knee) in the direction of the tabernacle prior to entering their pew, to recognize the special presence of Jesus there. The tabernacle is the gold colored object located in the front of the church, under the crucifix hanging from the ceiling.

I. Introductory Rites

STAND for the opening Song. “You are Mine” – *Ritual Song 762*

[It is a parish custom to process the flag during the Liturgies of Memorial Day Weekend.

In this song, we are reminded of God’s great love for each of us as His son or daughter, and in particular, for Fr. Joe, on this day when he became His priestly ordained servant.]

Fr. Joe: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. *[All together make the sign of the cross.]*

All: Amen.

Fr. Joe: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All: And also with you.

[Fr. Joe will then briefly introduce the Mass and today’s special feast and celebration. He will conclude with words such as the following:]

Penitential Rite:

Fr. Joe: As we prepare to celebrate the mystery of Christ's love, let us acknowledge our failures and ask the Lord for pardon and strength.

[period of silent reflection.]

Deacon: Lord Jesus, you came to gather the nations into the peace of God’s kingdom: Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: You come in word and sacrament to strengthen us in holiness: Christ, have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Deacon: You will come in glory with salvation for your people: Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Fr. Joe: May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

Gloria:

[For the musical setting of the Gloria, see the liturgy guide distributed at Mass. It was chosen because when little Joey first thought about the possibility of being a priest, he would say to himself that he wanted this version of the Gloria sung at his first Mass.]

**All: Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,
You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

Opening Prayer:

Fr. Joe: Let us pray.*[After a time of silent prayer]* God we praise you: Father all-powerful, Christ Lord and Savior, Spirit of love. You reveal yourself in the depths of our being, drawing us to share in your life and your love. One God, three Persons, be near to the people formed in your image, close to the world your love brings to life. We ask you this, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, true and living, for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

[sit]

LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading:

Lector: A reading from the Book of Proverbs

Thus says the wisdom of God: "The LORD possessed me, the beginning of his ways, the forerunner of his prodigies of long ago; from of old I was poured forth, at the first, before the earth. When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no fountains or springs of water; before the mountains were settled into place, before the hills, I was brought forth; while as yet the earth and fields were not made, nor the first clods of the world.

"When the Lord established the heavens I was there, when he marked out the vault over the face of the deep; when he made firm the skies above, when he fixed fast the foundations of the earth; when he set for the sea its limit, so that the waters should not

transgress his command; then was I beside him as his craftsman, and I was his delight day by day, playing before him all the while, playing on the surface of his earth; and I found delight in the human race."

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God!

Responsorial Psalm: How Glorious is Your Name *Ritual Song 32*

Second Reading:

Lector: A reading from the Letter to the Romans

Brothers and sisters: Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith to this grace in which we stand, and we boast in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we even boast of our afflictions, knowing that affliction produces endurance, and endurance, proven character, and proven character, hope, and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God!

[stand]

Alleluia:

[The cantor/choir will lead the assembly in an "Alleluia". See Ritual Song 395]

Gospel:

Deacon: The Lord be with you. **All: And also with you.**

Deacon: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John

All: Glory to you, Lord!

[At this point, typically all assembled make a small sign of the cross on their own foreheads, lips and hearts that the Word of God will be in our minds, on our lips and in our hearts.]

Deacon: Jesus said to his disciples: "I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth. He will not speak on his own, but he will speak what he hears, and will declare to you the things that are coming. He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you. Everything that the Father has is mine; for this reason I told you that he will take from what is mine and declare it to you."

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

[sit]

Homily:

[Fr. Joe preaches his first homily as a priest. The homily's text will be posted after the Mass at: <http://www.frjoeordination.info/index.cfm?fa=downloads>].

[stand]

Profession of Faith:

All: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, one in Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven:

[bow during the next two lines:]

by the power of the Holy Spirit
he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered, died, and was buried.
On the third day he rose again in fulfillment of the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

General Intercessions / Prayer of the Faithful:

Fr. Joe: Confident in the overflowing love of our Triune God, let us turn to our Heavenly Father with these, our needs:

Lector: [several petitions will then be read, each one ending with the words:] ...let us pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer. [repeated after each petition]

Fr. Joe: Father, you who created us in love and sent your Son and Holy Spirit among us to love and encourage us, we ask you to receive these and all the petitions we hold quietly in our hearts through Christ Our Lord.

All: Amen.

[sit]

Offertory Collection, Song, and Procession:

Here I am Lord *Ritual Song 802*

[The song, Here I am Lord, has been one with powerful meaning for Fr. Joe ever since his confirmation and is based on Isaiah 6, one of his favorite chapters of the Bible. As the bread and wine are brought to the altar by Fr. Joe's Godparents, nieces, nephew & Godchildren to be transubstantiated into the Body and Blood of Christ, we are invited, at this time of grace, to place our own sufferings and sorrows, joys and gratitude, hopes and dreams on the altar as well, uniting them with God. Fr. Joe's parents are bringing forward his new chalice blessed yesterday by Archbishop Nienstedt, and paten, which were donated by the Knights of Columbus in memory of deceased Knight Jerome Petron].

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Presentation of the Gifts / Preparation of the Altar:

[stand]

Fr. Joe: Pray, my brothers and sisters, that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

All: May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands,
for the praise and glory of his name,
for our good, and the good of all his Church.

Prayer over the Gifts:

Fr. Joe: Lord our God, make these gifts holy and through them make us a perfect offering to you. We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.

All: Amen.

Eucharistic Prayer

Preface Dialogue:

Fr. Joe: The Lord be with you. **All:** And also with you.

Fr. Joe: Lift up your hearts. **All:** We lift them up to the Lord.

Fr. Joe: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God. **All:** It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Fr. Joe: Father, all-powerful and ever-living God, we do well always and everywhere to give you thanks. We joyfully proclaim our faith in the mystery of your Godhead. You have revealed your glory as the glory also of your Son and of the Holy Spirit: three persons equal in majesty, undivided in splendor, yet one Lord, one God, ever to be

adored in your everlasting glory. And so, with all the choirs of angels in heaven we proclaim your glory and join in their unending hymn of praise:

Holy, Holy (Sanctus): (music in Ritual Song 322)

**All: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

[kneel]

Eucharistic Prayer III:

Fr. Joe: Father, you are holy indeed, and all creation rightly gives you praise. All life, all holiness comes from you through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, by the working of the Holy Spirit. From age to age you gather a people to yourself, so that from east to west a perfect offering may be made to the glory of your name.

And so, Father, we bring you these gifts. We ask you to make them holy by the power of your Spirit, that they may become the body + and blood of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at whose command we celebrate this eucharist.

On the night he was betrayed, he took bread and gave you thanks and praise. He broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:

Take this, all of you, and eat it:
this is my body which will be given up for you.

When supper was ended, he took the cup. Again he gave you thanks and praise, gave the cup to his disciples, and said:

Take this, all of you, and drink from it:
this is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of me.

Memorial Acclamation:

Fr. Joe: : Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

All: Ritual Song #323

Eucharistic Prayer III (continued):

Fr. Joe: Father, calling to mind the death your Son endured for our salvation, his glorious resurrection and ascension into heaven, and ready to greet him when he comes again, we offer you in thanksgiving this holy and living sacrifice.

Look with favor on your Church's offering, and see the Victim whose death has reconciled us to yourself. Grant that we, who are nourished by his body and blood, may be filled with his Holy Spirit, and become one body, one spirit in Christ.

Fr. Ed: May he make us an everlasting gift to you and enable us to share in the inheritance of your saints, with Mary, the virgin Mother of God, with the apostles, the martyrs, and all your saints, on whose constant intercession we rely for help.

Fr. Jim: Lord, may this sacrifice, which has made our peace with you, advance the peace and salvation of all the world. Strengthen in faith and love your pilgrim Church on earth; your servant, Pope {Benedict}, our Bishop {John}, {his assistant bishop Lee}, and all the bishops, with the clergy and the entire people your Son has gained for you. Father, hear the prayers of the family you have gathered here before you. In mercy and love unite all your children wherever they may be.

Welcome into your kingdom our departed brothers and sisters, and all who have left this world in your friendship. We hope to enjoy for ever the vision of your glory, through Christ our Lord, from whom all good things come.

Doxology and Great Amen:

Priests: Through him, with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever.

All: Amen! [*sung Music in Ritual Song 327*]

[stand]

COMMUNION RITE

Lord's Prayer:

Fr. Joe: Let us pray for the coming of the kingdom as Jesus taught us.

Note to Protestants: "For Thine is the kingdom ..." is not included in the Catholic recitation of the Lord's Prayer, although it comes soon thereafter.

**All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

Fr. Joe: Deliver us, Lord, from every evil, and grant us peace in our day. In your mercy keep us free from sin and protect us from all anxiety as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

All: For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever.

Sign of Peace:

Fr. Joe: Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles: I leave you peace, my peace I give you. Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and grant us the peace and

unity of your kingdom where you live for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

Fr. Joe: The Peace of the Lord be with you always.

All: And also with you.

Deacon: Let us offer each other a sign of peace.

[The ministers and all the people exchange an embrace, handshake, or other appropriate gesture of peace with those near them, according to local custom.]

Breaking of the Bread:

All (sung): Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: grant us peace.

[kneel]

Communion:

Fr. Joe: This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Happy are those who are called to his supper.

All: Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed.

IMPORTANT NOTE ON THE RECEPTION OF COMMUNION

All are invited to come forward at the time of Holy Communion. If you are in full communion with the Roman Catholic Church, please receive the precious Body and Blood of Christ. If you are unable to receive Communion, please cross your arms over your chest to receive a blessing and continue savoring the Word of God we have all received.

Fr. Joe's further explanation: One of the most uncomfortable/painful parts of being a non-Catholic at Mass can occur at Communion-time. It is the very clear policy of the Catholic Church that except in extremely rare, case-by-case situations with the Bishop's prior approval, only properly-disposed Catholics should approach to receive the Sacrament of Communion/Eucharist. If one does not understand what Communion/the Eucharist means to Catholics, this policy can seem inhospitable or unnecessarily exclusive, that one is not allowed to share table fellowship; especially since many Protestant churches have an open communion policy. However, the Catholic understanding of Communion is different than that of most Protestant denominations, and the meaning of Catholic Communion is far deeper than table fellowship. Although not a perfect analogy, in many ways Catholic Communion is spiritually closer to "bedroom fellowship" than it is to "table fellowship." Catholics believe that Jesus is really present in the Eucharist, that He intimately becomes a part of us in the Eucharist, and that a special connection among Catholics results from this. For someone who does not believe in Jesus' real presence to receive the Eucharist would be a form of blasphemy. Furthermore, receiving the Eucharist is a public statement of membership and belief in the Catholic Church. For a non-Catholic to receive Communion would make him or her a public liar.

During the time of reception of Communion all present, whether or not one is receiving Communion, are encouraged to pray. One good intention to pray for during this time would be Christian unity, that someday Christians will once again be one, as Jesus desires (John 17:20-23). To see a copy of the official communion policy, go to:

www.usccb.org/liturgy/current/intercom.shtml.

Communion Hymns:

I am the Bread of Life

Ritual Song 931

[sit]

Period of Silence and Song of Praise: Lady of Knock

Verse 1 *sung by Sarah Sprinthall, Kindergarten & high school classmate of Fr. Joe; Cantor and SEAS Choir member*

Refrain: **All: Golden Rose, Queen of Ireland, all my cares and troubles cease.
As I kneel with love before You, Lady of Knock, my Queen of Peace.**

Verse 2 *sung by Dr. Maureen McDonnell, friend & former teammate on REFRESH retreat*

Refrain: **All: Golden Rose, Queen of Ireland, all my cares and troubles cease.
As I kneel with love before You, Lady of Knock, my Queen of Peace.**

Verse 3 *sung by Christy Emch, friend & former teammate on REFRESH retreat*

Refrain **All: Golden Rose, Queen of Ireland, all my cares and troubles cease.
As I kneel with love before You, Lady of Knock, my Queen of Peace.**
[repeat]

[Many Catholic couples, such as Joe's own sister Cathy & brother-in-law John Santini, at their wedding Mass, bring a bouquet of flowers to a statue of Mary to ask her to intercede with God to shower blessings upon the couple, and also to serve as an example to them of how to live out a life of love and saying yes to God. Fr. Joe adapts this tradition by taking to the Marian statute a golden rose, purchased last June in the building where Pope John Paul the Great was born in Wadowice, Poland. This gesture not only acknowledges Mary's (spiritual) motherly care for Fr. Joe, but also his Polish roots. While he brings the flower to the statue of Mary, the song "Lady of Knock" is sung, which serves as an unofficial theme song of the St. Paul Seminary under the leadership of Msgr. Callaghan, also reflects Fr. Joe's Irish roots.]

[stand]

Prayer after Communion:

Fr. Joe: Let us pray. Lord God, we worship you, a Trinity of Persons, one eternal God. May our faith and the sacrament we receive bring us health of mind and body. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

[sit]

Announcements and Traditions:

[Several announcements and expressions of gratitude are made. In addition, Fr. Joe will make a special presentation. A tradition is that a newly-ordained priest gives to his mother the purificator on which was wiped the excess chrism oil of his ordination. The purificator, in turn, is to be placed in her casket when she dies. In giving this purificator to his half-German mother, Fr. Joe acknowledges his roots from Germany, as well as France, the Netherlands and Switzerland. A similar tradition exists of the newly-ordained priest giving to his father the stole used during his first confession. Fr. Joe will present that stole to his father at a future Mass of Thanksgiving.]

CONCLUDING RITE

[stand]

Greeting:

Fr. Joe: The Lord be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

Blessing:

Deacon: Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing.

Fr. Joe: May the Lord bless you and keep you,

All: **Amen.**

Fr. Joe: May his face shine upon you and be gracious to you,

All: **Amen.**

Fr. Joe: May he look upon you with kindness and give you his peace,

All: **Amen.**

Fr. Joe: May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. *[All make sign of the cross as Fr. Joe says the names of the Trinity]*

All: **Amen.**

Dismissal:

Deacon: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God!**

Recessional and Closing Song: City of God *Ritual Song 799*

[We are encouraged to take the graces of the sacrament into the world to build God's kingdom on Earth, to build a Civilization of Life and Love, through service, encouragement, & forgiveness.]

Non-Mass note: Everyone is invited to attend a post-Mass reception in the gathering space, during which you can receive Fr. Joe's blessing. A meal for invited guests will be held in Mother Seton Hall. Guests are welcome to enter the hall at 6:15p.m.

Credit: Materials at the web site www.catholic-resources.org were used significantly in the development of this Mass Guide.

Ministers of the Liturgy

Principal Celebrant and Homilist	Fr. Joseph Jerome (Fr. Joe) Bambenek
Sanctuary Concelebrants	Fr. Jim Perkl, Pastor, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church Fr. Ed Fride, Pastor, Christ the King Church, Ann Arbor, MI and former Pre-Theology Program director, Ave Maria College
Anticipated Concelebrants	Frs. Scott Carl, John Siebenaler, Martin Siebenaler, Juvenalis Asantemungu, Omar Guanchez
Master of Ceremonies	Fr. Allan Paul Eilen, Associate Pastor, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church
Deacon of the Word	Rev. Mr. Jonathan Kelly, seminarian friend
Deacon of the Altar	Rev. Mr. Nichols Rottman, Pre-theology roommate
Processional Deacon	Rev. Mr. James Lannan, seminarian friend
Sacristan	Diane Naatz, parishioner & friend
Lectors	Catherine Santini, sister Randall Bambenek and John Runger, cousins
Chalice & paten Bearers Gift Bearers	Jerome and Mary Ann Bambenek, parents Alexandra Mary (Allie) Santini, niece and Goddaughter; Matthew John and Margaret Sophie (Meg) Santini, nephew and niece; Nicholas Stefonowicz, Godson; and Gerald Papenfuss and Joann Ziegeweid, Godparents
Acolytes	Peter Winimi Akudugu, Timothy Lawrence, Luke Marquard, and Andrew Stueve, Seminarian friends
Processional Servers	Pre-Theologians & Ghanaian Seminarians Servers of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church
Greeters & Ushers	Parishioners of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church
Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion	Joann Ziegeweid, Godmother & aunt; Carol Runger, aunt John Paul Morgan, former seminarian classmate Janie Carlson, Deian Guck, Jeannie Hill, & Mary Kay Savoie, parishioners & friends
Flag Bearers	Roger Papenfuss, great-uncle Mike Schommer, friend & parishioner
Honor Guard	Knights of Columbus Mother Teresa (Rosemount) and Ravoux (St. Paul) Assemblies
Accompanist	Chris Falteisek
Cantor	Sarah Sprinthall
Guest Book Hostesses	Brenda Bambenek, Jolene Hopper, Peggy Johnson, Ann Papenfuss, Teri Papernfuss, and Rachael Shaw, cousins

Expressions of Gratitude

Fr. Joe would like to give special thanks to:

- My parents, Jerry and Mary Ann Bambenek, for their model of Catholic living and their loving support for all these years; and to my sister, Cathy, brother-in-law, John, and their children, Allie, Matt and Meg for their support and their witness of dedication, hard work and integrity.
- Fr. Jim Perkl and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church for the support they have given me over the years and for allowing me to celebrate my first Mass in the Church and the meal thereafter in Mother Seton Hall.
- The Seton Singers under the direction of Elizabeth Hermanson.
- The Hand Bell Choir under the direction of Ramona McCullough (who was my Preschool Religion Teacher).
- Sarah Sprinthall, Dr. Maureen McDonnell and Christy Emch for leading us in “Lady of Knock.”
- The 4th Degree Knights of Columbus for their dignified service during Mass.
- Various family members and friends who undertook a liturgical role.
- Faith Siebenaler, for the work she did setting up many logistical details for the Mass, reception and dinner.
- The St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish Life Committee and Decorating Committee as well as many volunteers for their great work & enthusiasm in planning, decorating and assisting at the reception and dinner.
- Members of the Hastings Council of Catholic Women for their prayers and support over the years, and for serving today as the Visiting Priests’ Sacristy Attendants.
- Chris Falteisek and Sarah Sprinthall for their work in planning the liturgy and compiling the liturgy guide.
- Jessica Welsh for her sewing on the deacon dalmatics.
- For all of you, including those who travelled great distances, for being here to celebrate with me on this special day.
- To our great, Triune God, who created each of us out of super-abundant love with our own unique vocation; Who became one of us, suffered and died for us so that we could have eternal fellowship with Him; and Who placed us into the lives of one another during our time on this earth for the purpose of building each other up and helping each other to heaven.

A Message from Fr. Joe

Thank you for coming to celebrate with me at this important moment in my life, and for doing so by participating in the worship of our loving, Triune God in the Holy Mass on the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity. Today is a very unique and special time of grace in my life as I become a priest forever. It is my hope that today will also be a day of grace for each of us: a time when we all participate in a deeper way in the life of God. I pray that our time at this Mass will deepen our love for Him and our openness to discerning and following with courage the wondrous plan that He has for each of our lives, if we but cooperate and have the courage to follow.

One of the blessings in my life has been the way that God has worked through the many people who have meaningfully touched my life over its four decades. The breadth of that influence is seen in the diversity of special people who have come here today. It brings me great joy that so many of you have made the effort to come here on the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend.

As indicated in the Expressions of Gratitude section of this guide, today's ordination celebration is the result of effort by many people, some who have been working on arrangements literally for over a year. Special thanks are due to my parents Jerry & Mary Ann who have spent scores of hours working on preparations. Faith Siebenaler has been the point person at the parish on so many matters and has worked closely with members of the Social and Decorating Committees in their planning for the reception and dinner. Chris Faltiesik and the musicians have put much work into planning and practicing the beautiful music we are hearing this evening.

Finally, please pray for me, that I will be a faithful priest and that my ministry will bear much fruit in the lives of others. Pray as well, in this year for priests, for all priests, that we may be instruments of God's love in the world: men who serve as bridges to God and who help others to live out the Universal Call to Holiness. Living out such a call — that each one of us, not only priests and nuns, are created by God to follow in Jesus' footsteps and to conform ourselves to His image in the unique circumstances in which we are placed, and with the unique talents we were given—requires grace, a grace that is mediated through the Church and its priests, as well as through one another. None of us are alone on this journey of life to eternity. Rather, we are to help each other grow in faith, hope and love, and we are to “encourage each other daily, while it is still today” (Hebrews 3:13) so that when our time on Earth is through, the Lord welcomes us with the words “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matt 25:21).

Cover Icon

designed by Scott Schueller, a long-time friend

Fr. Joe's commentary on the icon:

Ordination is a time of grace, as a man enters into the Paschal Mystery of Christ, both into His suffering and also into His promise of Eternal Life, in a new way. He does so not for his own sake, but to lead others into deeper union with our Triune God, the God on whom the whole universe rests. For the Christian, entry into the Paschal Mystery (the passion, death & resurrection of Jesus) begins in the blue waters of baptism, which was foreshadowed by Joshua leading the People of Israel into the Promised Land through the Jordan River. In the blue under the pillar we also see the humble & patient love of the Blessed Mother. In the paradox of Christianity, the cross is the ultimate sign of God's self-giving love. Through my reflections I have come to posit that Christ's scourging at the pillar is a similar paradoxical sign of Christian hope. We, in turn, through encouragement can catalyze hope, but not create it in others. Encouragement is one of the most important duties of a father, whether it be a natural father or a spiritual one, and we are all responsible to "encourage each other daily while it is still today" (Hebrews 3:13). The crown of thorns on the pillar reminds the priest that as he is configured into Christ the head, he witnesses Christ's kingship in suffering, with the hope of sharing in His eternal glory. The images of suffering are enfolded within the loving arms of Jesus and the Blessed Mother to remind us that they are always there for us. The dove reminds us of our eternal destiny with God. His love and Mercy will ultimately triumph and our suffering will end. When we share in the suffering of Christ, we do so in light of the Resurrection's hope, not for the sake of suffering itself.