

**Living the Spirit  
Celebrating Life  
With Monsignor David Morrison  
And True and Wonderful Friends**

As we come to the public parish celebrations of my sixtieth anniversary of Ordination, I wish to take this occasion to share some of my thoughts in these last days. They mirror those I had at some key moments of my life. Certainly one does not forget some aspects of the day of ordination itself. I recall little things like how cool the weather was, how late the car was to pick me up from the Seminary for the drive to the Cathedral. I think of how emotional it was to realize that one's desires were actually fulfilled. I recall how on the next day I had my First Mass and in those days gave Communion for the first time to my closest and dearest ones.

Many thoughts do not stay on those distant days. I think of the various ministries my priesthood has involved. I was hardly ever a curate – that was the usual term for an assistant to a pastor. I was sent to teach in high school. I had great enthusiasm for the work. Perhaps looking back, my feelings were addressed more to the world of ideas than the persons being taught. Then I was sent to Rome to study. On return I was back in school, but with other duties. Soon I was made a pastor in Boyertown. No sooner had I seen to the building of its first real church than I was changed to St. Francis in Allentown. I was put in charge of the Tribunal, and at a time when there were many changes in that work. Then Bishop Welsh called me to be in his assistant in various jobs.

Such a history seems at present to have been so very easy. That is because I never lacked the full support of those I tried to serve. That is why at one point I wrote: “Thanks for all your love expressed in so many ways. Thanks to the priests who serve with me, for their love of Christ which reveals the mystery of the priesthood in practical measure.”

Today I say that to you for these twenty or so years I have lived among you at Our Lady. You have been a great encouragement for me. I see faith, hope and love around me. I recall a spiritual writing: **“You know that only someone who truly loves you can help you link this life with the next.... God has sent people to be very close to you as you gradually let go of the world that holds you captive. You must trust fully in their love. Then you will never feel completely alone.... With the love of those who are being sent to you, you can surrender your fear and let yourself be guided into the new land.”** I think that this message that I apply to myself can readily apply to my readers. We must trust one another! Father Faber, a spiritual writer out of fashion these days, wrote: **“What we are doing is really quite simple – we are waiting for the Lord. With measured pace, often very slowly we walk with him and meet him silently in each other.”** Let us continue our journey of life. An adventure with meaning and joy!

### Some Added Thoughts

As I prepare to preach the homily on Friday I have spent time meditating on the memorial of the day. It is of the Holy Name of Mary. My thoughts turn to the scriptural practice of seeing in the knowledge of a name the possession of great power over the one so named. God allowed Moses to know His Name, for he desired that in limited circumstances his chosen people would have the power to address him with the proper adoration and thanksgiving. By that use of His name they had the power to speak to God in a special way.

From my early days, and I suspect from yours, I came to know the Holy Name of Mary, the Mother of Jesus and our Mother. How often we have used that Name. It is a name with great power, for we Catholics know by faith that Mary listens to our pleadings. She truly is a mother for each of us. Sometimes our use of this name seems very routine, as when we say the Rosary. Yet, our hearts turn often enough to her in a crisis or in difficult times. We know that she takes our plea to her Son, Jesus. We trust that Jesus acts just as He did at Cana. [Of course, sometimes He knows His answer must be No to what we ask, and Yes to what He knows is for our good.]

Long ago when I was in seventh grade I asked Sister Grace Bernadette what more I had to do to become a priest. I recall that she said that one had to pray to Mary. And I did. I recall that on the day of my Ordination the name tag for my vestments had a Latin saying: “*Ego sum filius Ancillae Tuae*” – “I am the son of your Handmaid.” It was a fitting saying to become a lifelong motto for my relationship with the Lord. Mary had surely asked Jesus and He had not refused my plea.

I also have been thinking about what to preach on Sunday. I know I must not overlook the Solemnity of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. The Cross is the first sign we make at Mass. And priesthood is about the Mass. We begin our prayers with this sign, because we know it is a powerful sign. I think also of how at the Stations we say the prayer: “We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you; Because by your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world!”

As I write this I do not know how the homily will continue or end. I suppose I must take notice briefly of the celebration that touches me. I know the theology of the priesthood cannot be divorced from the theology of the Cross. Sacrifice, like that of the Cross redemptive, must be a part of priestly life. Indeed I hope my readers will know it is a part of all life. Christians by their call have the power to unite their sacrifices – offerings of self to God – to the great Sacrifice, the Sacrifice of the Cross. It is the great challenge for priests, and they need prayers to help them.

Finally, let me ask that you recall all that your priests over the course of your life have brought to you. Not as themselves, but as the instruments of the Lord’s love for you. Blessed Charles de Foucauld wrote about this: “**The priest...is something transcendent: through baptism he brings souls to birth, through the sacrament of penance he purifies them, through communion he gives them the Lord’s body as He himself did at the Last Supper, and as their deaths he helps them to appear before the Beloved by giving them ... their final forgiveness and their supreme strength.... What avocation!**”

*God love and bless you always!  
Monsignor David Morrison*

