

The year which has passed



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Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld lang syne?

For auld lang syne, my dear,

For auld lang syne.

We'll take a cup o' kindness yet,

For auld lang syne.

Throughout the English-speaking world, *Auld Lang Syne*, meaning the times gone past or good old days, is traditionally sung on New Year's Eve (known as Hogmanay in Scotland). My mention of that tradition does not hearken back to the writer of this catchy tune, but rather only to Canadian band leader Guy Lombardo, who sang it on midnight Jan. 1, 1929, in the Roosevelt Hotel in New York City. Guy Lombardo's orchestra played the song every New Year's Eve, in live broadcast from New York, until 1976. Since then, their recording has been played each year as part of the Times Square ball drop.

As we embark upon a new year, the lyrics of the song are interpreted as a call to remember long-standing acquaintances of our lives, as well as the year that is passing. Although we may fumble through the lyrics each New Year's Eve, the sentiment they hold touches a spot deep within each of us when we hear or sing this age-old holiday favorite.

As I begin a new year, I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the many blessings of the past year. The first of many blessings has been the gift of my priestly ministry. Although no day goes as it is planned in my Outlook calendar, each and every day brings many and varied opportunities for me to see the hand of God at work in my life and the lives of the people I am blessed to serve.

When I began my service as the director of priestly vocations more than three years ago, I was overwhelmed by the task before me. I was forgetting that it wasn't all up to me and that I needed to leave room for God to work. And, I have to admit that I am still overwhelmed, but in a much different way. I am presently overwhelmed by the number of vocations coming forth for our diocese. Our prayers are being heard ... men are responding to God's



call. (Keep praying that men will respond to God's call to serve as priests.)

The men of our diocese who are presently studying for the priesthood have richly blessed me in ways that I am uncovering more each and every day. Their enthusiasm and joy are contagious and have helped to reinvigorate my priesthood. I look forward to the future of the church in Grand Rapids with enthusiasm because of their energy and zeal.

Finally, I am blessed to be able to share the joys and the challenges of priesthood with our diocese through this column in *FAITH Grand Rapids*. The many readers who have taken the time to share with me how a specific column has touched them or given them new insights into priesthood make writing each month worth the time and effort it takes. I never set out to be a monthly columnist, but having the opportunity to write about the priesthood has only strengthened my vocation.

Catholic Diocese of Grand Rapids
online vocational resources:

Priestly vocations

dioceseofgrandrapids.org/vocation/welcome.htm

Religious orders

dioceseofgrandrapids.org/clergy/religiousorders.htm

