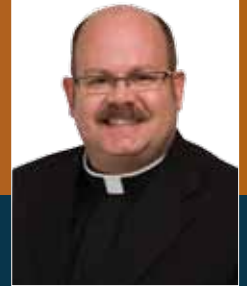


Celebrators of good news



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Bartolomé Esteban Murillo
Return of the Prodigal Son
1667-70

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e have all heard the parable of the prodigal son. It is the story of a son whose sinful life brings him to the point

where he realizes that working for his father would be better than where his choices had caused him to land. As he nears the family home, where he intends to ask to become a hired hand, he is spotted by his father, who runs out to greet him and offers him forgiveness. This moment of reconciliation is so momentous that his father can only see one way to celebrate – by gathering his family and friends for a party.

Some people become so excited by good news and pleasant happenings that they have to celebrate. Although it is not a party, our desire to hear the good news of Jesus Christ motivates the people of the church to continue to gather week after week to celebrate the momentous news of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The priest is the leader of our liturgy of praise, which animates us every Sunday and on all the feast days of our faith to celebrate the wonder of God becoming man and dying for us, only to rise again in order to pour down upon us seriously needed strength and the sanctifying power of his Holy Spirit. Priests, as

sacramental and liturgical leaders, preside at the various liturgical celebrations in which we experience God's grace that cleanses, feeds, heals, forgives and energizes the faithful.

Each and every time we gather for worship, the priest serves as the host or presider, of our gathering. Whether for the sacraments of baptism, holy Eucharist or marriage; in the confessional, or at the bedside of the dying; the priest is the presider who gathers us and leads us in prayer. It is the responsibility of the priest to help us enter into the mysteries of our faith by his prayerful, respectful and humble leadership of the assembly. However, what are the responsibilities of those who gather with the priest to celebrate the mysteries of our faith?

We all know that any gathering or party we attend requires something of those who have been invited. From the gift we may need to buy for the guest of honor to the kind of attire we are asked to wear, for those in attendance, each event requires a certain amount of preparation, as well as specific actions. That also is true when we gather together for worship. The assembly can only enter into the mysteries of our faith through their prayerful, respectful and humble participation.

Too often, we view the work of worship as the sole responsibility of the presider. However, without all of us bringing our best selves to the liturgy, the time together will only be the work of some. Just as the presider has to be prepared to lead the assembly in worship, the faithful gathered at any liturgy should be prepared to fully, actively and consciously worship the God who loves us and calls us his children.

If Jesus is good news for us, why wouldn't we want to celebrate with all the energy and ability we can bring to each and every liturgy?

Catholic Diocese of
Grand Rapids online
vocational resources:



Priestly vocations

dioceseofgrandrapids.org/vocation/welcome.htm

Religious orders

dioceseofgrandrapids.org/clergy/religiousorders.htm