

FROM FR. DEO

August 2, 2026



Seventeen Years as a Priest

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

On this 18th Sunday in Ordinary Time, I would like to share with you my joy and gratitude to God for the gift of priesthood. Seventeen years ago, on August 1, 2009, I was ordained a priest and promised to serve God and His people. Looking back, I can say with gratitude: God is good all the time... All the time God is good! He has been gracious and faithful to me.

At just 12 years old, after the genocide in Rwanda, I began asking myself what I would do with my life and who I wanted to become. As my country was recovering from that tragedy, I longed for goodness and healing. I wanted to become a man of God, help unite people, and heal wounded hearts. Along the way, I encountered the life and witness of St. Pio of Pietrelcina, from whom I learned the love of God, the Eucharist, and a (com)passion for souls. Like Isaiah, I felt unworthy, “a man with unclean lips...;” yet I heard the Lord ask, “Whom shall I send? And Who will go for us” (Isiah 6:8) My answer became, “Here I am, send me.” My priestly calling is to bring Christ to His people, feeding them with God's Word and sacramental grace, and bringing them to Him.

Let me share a few memorable moments from my priestly journey. In my first year as a priest, I dreamed that I was late for my morning Mass. I woke up at 2:00 a.m., rushed to get ready, only to discover that it was still dark outside! I guess God warned me not to be late to my own Mass! When I was learning Spanish and could barely speak it, I once forgot my written homily in my room. I began sweating before the Gospel proclamation as I realized that I had no notes. I prayed to the Holy Spirit, and that day, I am still not sure what language I spoke—but somehow, people understood the message! God is Good!

During the COVID-19 lockdown, I was alone in the rectory at St. Procopius Parish in the Pilsen area, Chicago. Each Thursday, we exposed the Blessed Sacrament in the prayer garden, where people gathered safely at a distance. I will always be grateful for the hope Jesus brought to His people during those difficult days.

When I became seriously ill with COVID-19 in September 2020, I experienced the community's love in a special way. People brought food, water, and medicine to my door simply because they cared. Throughout my priesthood, I have seen people die peacefully after receiving the holy Anointing; I have witnessed the brokenhearted leave Mass or Confession with renewed hope and joy. I have witnessed God's grace in countless ways, and for all of them, I am deeply grateful. I also humbly ask forgiveness from God and anyone I may have failed to see, hear, or accompany as I should have.

In 2009, Barak Obama became President of the US, and smartphones began to shift from a technology gadget for a few to a mainstream device. Indeed, in the past 17 years a lot has changed in our society and our world. What has not changed is that a priest is chosen from the community to serve the community (See He 5:1). I am especially grateful to you, my parish family, for sharing your faith, your joys and struggles with me. I pray that each one of you finds room in my priestly heart. Please pray for me, for all priests, and for those discerning their vocation. The world needs priests because the world needs Christ.

May the Lord continue to call many young men to say yes to the beautiful and demanding gift of the priesthood.

St Elizabeth of the Trinity, Pray for Us!

See you in church!

In Christ,

Fr Deo

