

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time
October 28, 2018

I just returned from our Cathedral in La Crosse where our Bishop Callahan ordained five new deacons this morning. Among them is our native son Richard Skifton. The Cathedral was full and the celebration very effusive. Deacon Skifton has been assigned to our parishes of Sacred Heart and St. Alexander's. A reception will be held tomorrow after the 10:30 mass with lots of food for all. The ladies of the parish council of Catholic women have worked all week. Pulled pork sandwiches and turkey sandwiches with all the trimmings. Come one come all.

The ordination of deacon Skifton inspires me to focus on the second reading today. It is about priesthood. Priesthood is a defining characteristic of the Catholic Church. It is clear in sacred Scripture that Jesus intended that there be a structure established to promote and implement his teaching. It would be impossible that after his time on earth that Christian teachings would be a free-for-all with no order, structure or authority. Out of the Motley crew of his 12 apostles he directed that there be established a systematic oversight regarding doctrine and sacraments.

We therefore have an unbroken link by way of apostolic succession where the priesthood has been conferred from the time of Jesus to this present place and time. Deacon Skifton went through five years in the deacon formation program. After much scrutiny and discernment he was approved to be ordained. As a deacon he is commissioned to preach, baptize, presided at marriages and funerals and assists at Mass. As a deacon he is considered a member of the Catholic clergy. He wears the Roman collar and the vestment of a deacon at mass.

It is the teaching of the Catholic Church that everyone who is baptized is ordained to the 1st of priesthood. The 2nd of priesthood is what I am ordained to . In the 3rd is that of a bishop .As a baptized person you have the Priestly power to administer baptism in an emergency situation. Most notable is the sacrament of marriage where husband-and-wife consecrate each other. The priest or deacon presiding at the marriage are only official witnesses. It is the bride and groom, exercising their priestly powers of baptism, who are the celebrants of the sacrament of marriage. And this is not only in the church on their wedding day but every moment of their lives

together. Husband-and-wife's, you consecrate each other. Sometimes you may not feel like you are blessing each other but in a nutshell, that is the sum and substance of your married life. It is sacred and holy.

The second reading goes on that no one takes this honor upon himself. There is no self-aggrandizement. The one and only high priest is Jesus, our God and King. Other than that we are agents and servants, sent to serve and make offerings for ourselves as well as for the whole Church..