

Fr. Martin's Reflection – June 23, 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On June 26 I will have the honor of celebrating my 30th anniversary of ordination to God's priesthood. I find it so strange thinking 30 years have passed, and in all it has been a wonderful 30 years. There have been difficulties and challenges along the way, but God has always been strong and has given me the strength and faith I have needed at those times. When something was beyond me, something that I knew I was unable to do or manage, God would send me a 'Simon of Cyrene.'

I have to say, from the get-go I was a reluctant disciple. I was living and working in New York. Life was good, skiing in the winter, beach in the summer, and a little work in between to pay the bills. Then God changed all that. Over the next 30 years there were a whole lot of 'I don't want to do,' things that I found myself doing. I didn't want to study for the priesthood in Ireland, I studied in Ireland. I didn't want to teach after ordination, I taught for 8 years in High School. Yet, there were many exciting adventures too. I led the team that established Youth Ministry in my home diocese, organizing and leading youth groups on pilgrimages all over the world. After 23 years of priesthood I'm thinking I'll get a quiet parish and sail off into the twilight. No, God decides that there is another adventure God wants me to go on, go to America. Did this surprise me? Yes. Did it surprise family and friends? Yes. Some even thought I was a little crazy as I was approaching 50 and had spent all my priestly life in Ireland, why go to the US? The only answer I had was, God wanted it.

I say all this, not to promote the book that I'll never write, but to highlight the greatness of God. What God has done with me and through me has simply amazed me. When I sit down on June 26 and reflect on the 30 years God has given me as a priest and the amazing and blessed life I have had, I pray for God's continued blessing. A big part of this blessed life has been the people God has blessed me with. Your prayers, support, and encouragement have been sustaining food for the journey. Thank you for all your love, prayers, and support.

May God bless you and guide you always, and don't ever be afraid to say yes to God, God will do things with you that you never thought were possible and fill you with such joy that you never thought was achievable. God's love is everything.

Fr. Martin