

Thank you all for coming. You might like to know who all is here. I'd like to invite some groups to stand, and people, you may stand more than once. Members of my family (Tim & Merrie). Teachers, especially BVMS. Friends & family who knew me when I was ordained in 1979 (Joe Powers, Stephen Wise). Louie, Gael, Martin, Tom C., Rae. People who belonged to St. Regis Parish when I was pastor there. The planning committee for this event (Webster, Farnans, Workmans, Foster, Molloy, staff). Members of St. Aloysius in Maysville. Members of St. Munchin. People who haven't had a chance to stand.

Twenty-five years is a milestone for a priest, but it is also a milestone for the people. Priests don't come out of nowhere, and like any appliance priests don't last 25 years without a lot of maintenance. We wouldn't be here today if it weren't for you. Thank you for encouraging me along in this adventure. I have enjoyed every day as a priest. And some of those days have been doozies.

Although I've had one job, it has taken different shapes. I've been an associate pastor, a student, an educator, a musician, a writer and a pastor. I've enjoyed it all, but I enjoy being pastor of a parish the most.

A priest needs a number of tools to do his job. He needs to be able to pray. He has to be comfortable with personal prayer and able to lead others in prayer. He has to be able to preach, to listen to the word of God and share it with people and the culture in which they live. A priest needs the skills of counseling and administration. He needs to play a public role that often brings glory but sometimes brings shame. He needs to be able to criticize his own work. Plenty of other people criticize his work, but believe it or not we priests get very little direct supervision, and we have no spouse to give us a reality check once in a while. So if we don't watch ourselves, nobody will. Above all, a priest has to live the gospel he preaches. He has to be the person he calls others to be.

It took victims of sexual abuse to remind us how important priests are to our society, and how much damage happens when we fail.

I learn from day to day, more and more of what you expect of me. The challenges never go away. I will always rely on the love, support and wisdom that you all have shown me. I am a better priest now than I was 25 years ago, but I still have much more to learn, and I look forward to each additional year that God gives me. Thank you for coming today and reminding me how much gratitude I owe God for calling me to serve this church as a priest. God bless you all.

Lord God,

from the abundance of your mercy
enrich your servants and safeguard them.
Strengthened by your blessing,

**may they always be thankful to you and bless you with unending joy.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.**