

Josie Petermeier's Ordination Homily

May 17, 2015

“What YHWH needs from us: Simply do justice, love kindness, walk humbly with your God.”

All the readings that Josie picked for her ordination are challenging and demanding. The prophet Micah has given us a simple instruction for how we are to live our life. The requirement is an internal conversion and an attitude of spirit that is other centered. Love as God has loved us. Our walk is a walk with God as our companion.

The disciples were walking the road to Emmaus. They are actually leaving Jerusalem. Have you ever found yourself going in the wrong direction? I often need my GPS and the lady saying, “At the next light make a u-turn...recalculating!” We sometimes find ourselves going away from where we thought we were heading. The disciples are discouraged. They are disillusioned. Their focus had become themselves and their own disappointment. They could not see because their center of attention, their heart is on discouragement, disappointment, disillusionment. As the Scripture says “We had hoped”. **“We had hoped”!** I suspect that each of us here in some way or another has experienced this road to Emmaus.

In that space the presence of the risen Christ could not be experienced. It took a lot more walking, remembering and being reminded of the words of scripture. Then they understood the familiar pattern: Taking, blessing, breaking, and giving of the bread. It is in that experience that their eyes are opened and they realized that their hearts were alive and burning.

None of this would have happened without the disciple's gift of hospitality. They opened their home to the stranger. So Jesus goes in to stay with them. He unexpectedly begins acting as the host. He takes the bread, says the blessing over it, broke it and gave it to them. It is in that action that their eyes were opened.

We sang as we gathered, “All are Welcome”, Jesus invites, welcomes all of us to his table. All are invited to celebrate and participate. His hospitality and ours is open to all.

Josie today has invited us to walk with her in her journey and in being called to ordination by you, her family, friends, and communities as well as the Midwest region.

If some of you are not familiar with us, Roman Catholic Women Priests (RCWP) is an international initiative within the Roman Catholic Church, which has read the signs of the times and has responded to the call of the Holy Spirit for the ordination of women to the priesthood.

We (Roman Catholic Women Priests) believe that as baptized persons, all members of the community are equal and gifted with various charisms. Some are called as ordained priests to convene and to minister as sacramental leaders to the community of believers. Our model of priesthood is servant-leadership. We are worker priests who strive to empower others, mobilize resources, release creativity and enable communities to form and thrive.

We attempt to live a reflective, contemplative and prayerful lifestyle which seeks to follow, in prophetic obedience, where the Spirit leads us, individually and collectively. We believe that it is possible to live and build up a new model of priesthood that in itself would bring about a new model of church. There are now 208 Roman Catholic Women Priests in the US, South America, Canada, South Africa and Europe.

Most importantly, we ensure, by providing priests to a renewed and emerging Catholic church, that the memory of Jesus, is perpetuated through the proclamation of the Word and the celebration of Sacraments, especially the Eucharist. Nourished by Bread and Word (as the disciples were on the road to Emmaus) we call forth the gifts of the community to do the work of justice, peace, truth-telling and integrity of life.

Our mission is to spiritually prepare, ordain and support, theologically qualified women from all states of life who are committed to an inclusive model of Church and who are called by the Holy Spirit and their communities to minister to the People of God.

All candidates for ordination write a letter to the bishop asking for ordination. Josie wrote in her letter to me: "I understand that in being ordained a priest, I am taking on a public role of service in the church, that I am called by God and the communities I serve, to preside and preach at Eucharist, to live out the Gospel in

love, to model my life on Jesus. It means to be a person of prayer attuned to the Spirit, and to pray with and for the People of God. Being a Priest means serving the sick and homeless and hungry, the people on the margins. As an RCWP priest, it means being inclusive as Jesus was, and supporting other members of RCWP.”

Josie, your reflection rings true to the heart of what it means to be a Roman Catholic Woman Priest.

The reading chosen from Paul’s letter to the Colossians gives all of us the heart and mind of how we are to be about our life and ministry:

Clothe yourselves with heartfelt compassion,
with kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.
Bear with one another.

May each of us hear and accept the challenge to continue to walk the journey with the mind and heart of Christ. And Josie, may you walk humbly with your God; doing justice and loving tenderly.