

## PASTOR'S COLUMN

### *Best Lent Ever and My 25th Anniversary Celebration of Priesthood*

**Best Lent Ever?** A parishioner shared a Lenten tip which he heard in a homily 25 years ago. The priest who preached the homily suggested that everyone make a Lenten resolution not just for Lent but for a whole year or even longer. “That homily hit me like a ton of bricks,” the parishioner said. He decided to give up self-pity for Lent that year, and kept it up after Lent ended. Another Lent, he committed to saying “no” to himself and his desires at least once a day (e.g. “no” to turning on the car radio, “no” to a glass of wine, “no” to an uncharitable thought); he kept that up after Lent ended. Another Lent, he committed to being a better listener to his wife; he has tried hard to keep that commitment ever since. Thanks to the parishioner who shared this Lenten tip and gave me – and hopefully all of us – food for thought in the final weeks of the Lenten Season.

**My 25th Anniversary of Priesthood.** When I was ordained a priest in 1994, I recall that a friend remarked, “You will be celebrating 25 years of priesthood before you know it.” Her remark struck me as wishful thinking since I wasn’t ordained until I was 41 years old! It seemed at the very least presumptuous to think I would be alive at 66 years of age, with all the stuff that can happen to a person in the course of a quarter century.

But now, my 25th anniversary of ordination has arrived, and my friend was right: twenty-five years of priesthood have gone by very quickly, except for those difficult days that seem to be twenty-five years long all by themselves!

I am grateful to God beyond words for the gift of priesthood for 25 years. I have had innumerable cherished experiences of priestly ministry and service, and the opportunity to journey with some of the most amazing priests, religious, seminarians and lay persons. I am so grateful to God that St. Francis Xavier Parish now is part of this incredible journey.

I will celebrate my 25th Anniversary of Ordination with a Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Francis Church on Saturday, April 27, at the 4 pm Vigil Mass. After Mass, there will be Reception in the School Auditorium with food, drink and music till 8:00 pm. Everyone is invited to attend the Mass and Reception and join me in thanking God for the gift of priesthood. And please pray for me in my Silver Jubilee Year as I assure you of my daily prayers for each of you.

God bless,  
Fr. Joe