



## *From your pastor...*

*I prostrated myself conscious of my miseries and I stood up a priest forever.*” This is one of the famous sayings of St. John Vianney known as “the Cure of Ars.” This phrase reminds me of that beautiful day when I answered “yes” to my own call to be a priest. After 9 years of formation, the Lord directed my mind and heart toward to be in union with His will. At the beginning of my priestly formation, I was not sure if this was my calling. At the age of 17, all I knew was that I wanted to discover what the Lord desired of me and I was excited. The plan to be a priest was not initially mine and probably not the plan that my family had for me. Worldly speaking, to be a priest was not a promising financial endeavor and would provide limited support for me and my family. However, the Lord had a different plan than mine and my family’s and I am very glad.

One of the phrases that captivated me in the first year of my formation was when I heard for the first time the words of Paul to the Philipians. After he converted, he stopped persecuting the Church and followed the Lord with passion, courage and strength. His words were, “*For his sake I have accepted the loss of all things and I consider them so much rubbish, that I may gain Christ*” (Phil 3:8). These words really helped me to focus my attention on God’s will and to set aside my own worldly plans for a plan that instead included that which is mystical, spiritual, sacramental, scriptural and divine. Paul portrayed for me how it is possible to abandoned one’s way and join the ways of God. At the beginning I thought I was losing my family, my friends, my freedom, my own life but later own I realized that I had all of that plus a life filled with satisfaction, affirmation, and peace. God’s way lead to all of this.

My Master in Arts degree was on “suffering as the greatest gift from God.” I could not have chosen a better topic. My research on this issue helped me to learn that life was not about acquiring and searching for the love of this world but instead to embrace the reality of suffering as part of the life of a follower of Jesus. This must be accepted with maturity. Acceptance helps us to be purified by the Lord. We are “polished” and made to become better human beings. This thesis helped me to strive for courage in the face of suffering which would help to enrich my priestly ministry.

Today, with joy, I look back and thank all those people that were part of my priestly formation. I thank my rectors, my formation directors, my spiritual directors, my confessors, my teachers, my sponsors, my family, my friends and all those that courageously helped me to become the priest who now serves at Our Lady of the Assumption.

Thank you, Lord, for calling me to be a priest and I ask you that I may be a priest filled with faith, joy and wisdom to the strength to continue guiding your flock toward you who are the fountain of joy. Thank you, Lord, for my vocation to the priesthood and thank you because on May 26<sup>th</sup> in 2006 “*I prostrated myself conscious of my miseries and I stood up a priest forever.*”

Sincerely,

Rev. Miguel Gonzalez