

'There is something radically mysterious about the Mass'

Meet Our Priests

This week's featured priest:

Most Rev.
Ronald M. Gilmore

YEAR FOR PRIESTS



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In honor of June 2009-June 2010 being named, "Year For Priests," the *Southwest Kansas Register* is running a new feature that each week will celebrate the life of different priest presently serving in the Diocese of Dodge City.

What was it that made you want to become a priest?

It is hard to say, really. I suppose it is bound up with serving up on the altar during Mass. There is something radically mysterious about the Mass. The vestments, the gestures, the language: the ritual fairly captivated me.

Was there a particular individual who inspired you to become a priest?

Several of them, really. There was my 4th grade teacher, Sister Justin. There was Father Michael Blackledge and Father Robert Kocour. There was Sister Justina, my sophomore World History teacher (she inspired me to be a missionary, which is exactly what I am in southwest Kansas).

Who were the people who encouraged you in your vocation?

I suppose I would have to put my dad at the top of that list (my

mom was more ambivalent about the whole thing). Then I would add my dad's family. They all live in and around Pittsburg and they were most supportive during my seminary years.

What do you like most about being a priest?

What I like most is the daily celebration of the Mass. That's when it all began for me, as I told you. I also like to preach: to hand on to others what I have seen and heard of God. As bishop, I like to encourage the creativity of priests and diocesan staff. I marvel at the surprising initiatives they come up with.

What has been one of the greatest challenges you face in your ministry?

I suppose the greatest challenge has been being Dodge City's bishop. I had always been a behind-the-scenes man, then all of a sudden in 1998, I was thrust onto the stage. There would be no more Mr. Private, only Mr. Public.

And a further great challenge has been integrating the newly arrived Latinos with the already here Anglos. I still am not sure how to wrap my arms around this challenge.

What has been one of the highlights so far of your priesthood?

One of the real highlights has been being among the priests of Dodge City. I came to them in fear and trembling, for their reputation preceded them. They could not have been more supportive. I admire them immeasurably.

What do you like to do in your free time?

I used to be a news junkie, but I've lost that over time. I do like to read, and I do so constantly.

If you could take a vacation anywhere in the world, where would you go?

I would go no where. I've been to Canada, to Italy, to Germany, to India, to South Korea, and Japan. I have no desire to go anywhere else. I shrink from the very thought of the rigors of today's airplanes.

If one of your hobbies is reading, what book are you now reading?

Right now I am reading Theodore Rex by Edmund Morris. It is a story of Theodore Roosevelt's two year terms as president of the United States early in the century.