

Father Jimmy Barrozo:

Love for the game of basketball leads to priesthood

Father Jimmy Barrozo is a priest from the Diocese of Sorsogon in the Philippines. He began his assignment as administrator of the parish cluster comprised of St. John the Baptist, Meade; St. Patrick, Plains; and St. Anthony, Fowler on Dec. 4, 2010.

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

At a young age, I had two passions: altar-serving and basketball. Even before first grade, I already started being an altar-server in our parish, not due to any religious or pious reason, but because, for being an altar-server, my Mom would always reward me with an extra goody every Christmas and shirt on my birthdays. And because my fellow servers were my best basketball buddies. Right after the Mass, we would go play at the nearby court. But it was the two grand basketball courts of the diocesan Minor Seminary that really started me on the road to priesthood. I would always wonder how it would feel to play on those courts. So, when I learned that my best friend took the entrance test to the High School seminary, I didn't have to be prodded to enter as well.

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

Father Douglas. Of all the priests regularly celebrating Mass in our parish, he was my favorite. Always friendly and funny, his antics never failed to send us servers into fits of laughter. And he turned out to be also into sports; I learned he loved to play basketball. Besides, he was also a faculty-member of the Minor Seminary when I decided to enter.

Meet Our Priests

Father
Jimmy Barrozo



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Who were people who encouraged you in your vocation?

My parents. Mom never stops praying for her son to become and remain a priest. Since I could remember, and until now, she goes to Mass daily, and spends an hour before the Blessed Sacrament -- she says, for her son-priest. She was ecstatic when she learned I wanted to enter the seminary. And though funds were meager at that time and seminary expense would further drain the resources, she nevertheless persuaded my dad to allow me just as well. So, he had to work double just to make both ends meet. My stay in the seminary was being paid by sweat and tears: If Mom and Pop were willing to go through this sacrifice just for me to pursue my dream, all the more I should treasure and love this precious vocation. When I had difficulties with my studies and seminary life, I would repeat my mantra: If I would only persevere with hard work and sustain it with prayer, just like Mom and Pop, I would also

succeed.

What do you like most about being a priest?

I am still fascinated by the thought of how God can make use of this unworthy priest to become the channel of blessing to His people. How my simple acts of kindness can mean a lot to the people and become an occasion to experience God's love. How God can make use of me, his most unworthy servant, transform the bread and wine into the very Body and Blood of Jesus. For me, it is always a humbling moment whenever I hold Christ's Body and Blood with my bare hands.

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

When my doctor discovered eight years ago that I have a pituitary tumor as big as a golf ball. I started to question God: why this sickness, why me -- even after all those years of service and sacrifice as a priest? I questioned His love, I left everything: I gave you everything, because you promised I am special in your sight. But how

God works so mysteriously! He would soon make me realize He could use even my sickness to prove even more His enduring love. Now I know: if only I let go and let God, if I just give Him some more time --- my greatest problem can become my biggest blessing.

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

I guess, it's my coming here. Being assigned here was the last thing I would expect. I had other wishes I told my bishop. But as it turned out, God has better plans for me. Always. And as it unfolds now, I cannot but be fascinated how God can write so straight with crooked lines.

What do you like to do in your free time?

I always love outdoors. In the Philippines, I would join my friends in camping and mountain climbing. I also tried scuba diving once; but I think I love the mountain experience more. Nothing beats celebrating the Holy Mass at the mountain peak so high you could almost kiss the sky.

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

I guess, to places where there are lots of history and culture. Rome, Britain, Egypt, the Holy Land.

What are your hobbies?

Aside from sports, I read. And if I have luck, watch the movie remake of the book. I am delighted by the treasure I found at Meade Library. I got to watch already titles like “The Color Purple”, “Pride and Prejudice”. . . and they have many more. I am presently reading Jane Smiley's “A Thousand Acres”.