

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This Friday, May 20th is the 50th Anniversary of Fr. Kelley's ordination to the priesthood. Next Sunday at the 10:30am Mass, he will be having a special celebration of the priesthood (all are welcome to come and celebrate with him).

Fifty years of commitment to anything is difficult. I look at my parents celebrating fifty years of marriage this August, and I know, while they still love each other deeply, it has not always been easy (like when they had a colicky son who screamed – seemingly non-stop – for his first year). Fr. Kelley has experienced struggles he never expected, watched men he respected leave the priesthood, watched the radical change of “how things are done” over the years, and so many other things. He has been through many parishes, and maintains friendships from all of them.

When I look at all he has done and seen over the years, I am so grateful that he has chosen to live here at St. Patrick Parish in his retirement. As I mentioned a few weeks ago, since he retired, he could have chosen to move to points south, spending his days on a beach chair, catching rays and eating bonbons. But he has chosen to work. While he has given up administration, he continues to be a presence in the Diocese – primarily assisting here at St. Patrick, in his free time – but also helping with vacation and emergency coverage at parishes throughout New Hampshire, he is still involved in the Blue Mass (a Mass dedicated to honoring emergency responders), he helps out at Catholic Schools, and he chooses to work in the Diocesan Archives.

Why would he do this? Does he get paid extra? No. He does it because he loves to serve. He does it because Jesus gave us a commandment:

love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. (John 13:34-35)

Fr. Kelley serves because he loves.

As we celebrate his Golden Anniversary next week, I invite you to thank him for his incredible gift of service – to St. Patrick Parish, yes, but more, to the whole Church in New Hampshire.

Fr. Kelley: *Ad Multos Annos!*

