

‘Christ has no hands but ours’

It is said that after German bombers destroyed an English cathedral during the Second World War, dedicated volunteers worked to repair one of the church’s broken statues of Christ. Rather than restore the figure’s missing hands, the artisans left Christ handless – replacing the artwork’s “Come unto Me” inscription with “Christ has no hands but ours.”

While the authenticity of that popular story is a matter for debate, the message it conveys is not: Christians are called to be Christ’s presence in the world today.

Priests carry out that call in a special way – celebrating Mass, anointing the sick, absolving sins, helping the poor and serving in ways that often go unnoticed and unappreciated.



Stephen Golder Photo

Stephen Golder, a photographer who lives in Georgia, recently completed a powerful project focused solely on the hands of priests.

With the blessing of leaders of the Archdiocese of Atlanta, the Catholic convert devoted seven months to following priests in northern Georgia, photographing their hands as a project for the recently completed Year for Priests.



Stephen Golder Photo

As you can see from the photos posted in this blog, the results are stunning.

Here’s how Golder describes the effort:



Stephen Golder Photo

Photographing these hands, especially focusing in detail on the movements and

images of the Eucharist, has left us properly awestruck at the incredible beauty of our faith.

It is our hope that these images will remind the faithful of the enormous gifts our priests bring to us: not only Christ in the Eucharist, but Christ in all they do.

Deacon Greg Kandra, author *The Deacon's Bench*, was probably the first to call national attention to this innovative effort. He met with the photographer, who convinced the good deacon to allow his own hands to be photographed as well.

St. Teresa of Avila wrote a prayer that seems to fit perfectly with Golder's design:

Christ has no body now on earth , but yours, No hands but yours, No feet but yours, Yours are the eyes through which is to look out Christ's compassion to the world; Yours are the feet with which he is to go about doing good; Yours are the hands with which he is to bless men now. Amen.



Stephen Golder Photo