

Priests Helping Priests

Earlier this month, the Holy Father concluded the “Year for Priests” with the celebration of a series of events held in Rome in the presence of some 15,000 priests from 97 countries.

At one of these events, Cardinal Claudio Hummes O.F.M., prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy, told the Pope, in the presence of the same throng of priests, “We would like the Year for Priests never to end; that is, we would like our striving towards sanctity, each in his own identity, never to end, and on this journey we may always be comforted and supported, as we have been this Year.”

Here in our own Archdiocese, our priests frequently report of the support they enjoy for their priestly ministry, something I’ve observed on many occasions. Such support comes in many forms and from many sources, including not only from our generous lay people, but also their brother priests. This was surely the case at our Cathedral of Mary Our Queen last weekend, when Deacon Greg Rapisarda became Father Rapisarda – the newest priest of Jesus Christ serving in our local Church. In spite of only one man being ordained, the Cathedral hosted hundreds of enthusiastic supporters from all over the Archdiocese.

That support shown to Father Rapisarda and other newly ordained priests does not end at their ordination. In fact, it is needed just as much, if not more, as he begins and carries out his years of priestly ministry. In this period of our Church’s history – when we are asking more of our priests, especially those recently ordained – they are in need of even greater assistance.

One way the Archdiocese is seeking to promote this is through the development of a program that would help orient new pastors by tapping into the reflections and

knowledge of our more “veteran” priests. Gratefully, Mrs. Anne Buening is leading the effort and ably so. She now serves as Pastoral Associate to Bishop Mitch Rozanski, and is a former Pastoral Life Director with experience leading a parish community. She is the mother of Father Matt Buening, pastor of St. Paul, Ellicott City.

Anne has shared with me some of the responses she has received from our selfless priests who, not surprisingly, have responded to her request for aid with typical zeal and thoughtfulness.

With so many priests, new and not-so-new, preparing to begin new pastorates this summer, I thought it especially appropriate to share the following priest-to-brother-priest advice:

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