
A Top 10 for Ministry

An article from the *Cathedral Times*
by Canon Wallace Marsh

This week marks the tenth anniversary of my ordination to the priesthood on August 11, 2007. This week also marks the occurrence of a special event in the life of our parish—Homecoming Sunday. So, I have decided to forego the weekly times article and offer a list of ten things that I have learned in 10 years as a priest.

1. **Baptism.** My parents presenting me for baptism (on November 1, 1978) means more to me than their vesting me with stole and chasuble at my ordination. Baptism is at the heart of who we are. You will experience this at Homecoming Sunday!
2. **Community.** The saints of old shaped my faith, but the saints in the pews have shaped my life. St. Philip's is about creating holy community that has a lasting impact on our lives.
3. **Music.** Learning to sing in church like I sing in the shower (loud and sometimes off key) changed my experience of the liturgy. The more you participate, the better it will be. Give it a try! Seriously!
4. **Children.** There is a reason Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me." Just listen to the Preschool kids in the halls on any given day of the week, or volunteer to work with our children's ministry. It is amazing.
5. **Mission.** One of Jesus' favorite words is "go." Your faith and life will be changed by going on a mission trip or a pilgrimage. Sunday's ministry fair will present many ways to put Jesus' words into action.
6. **Prayer.** It's like dancing. Our frustration occurs from our failure to acknowledge the music of life has changed and we are awkwardly dancing to the last song. Prayer is learning to dance with God wherever you are in life.
7. **Holy Eucharist.** Yes, even clergy feel as though sometimes we are going through the motions. But, there is always something holy that I take away from the liturgy. It has led me to conclude that an important part of faith is just showing up.
8. **Relationships.** I have been officiating weddings for ten years and I still cry at them. The relationships God places into our lives are holy gifts worthy of tears. These relationships are nurtured and strengthened in the church.
9. **Death.** I have sat at hundreds of deathbeds. The fear and uncertainty at a deathbed is similar to the fear and uncertainty in the delivery room. Yet, I believe the joy in which we welcome someone into this world is the same joy we will encounter when we leave this world.
10. **Resurrection.** It happens every day. From the laughter of Sarah in Genesis to the surprise by joy at the tomb, it is all a reminder that God is constantly bringing "good news" to our lives. My daily prayer is to have the eyes and heart to recognize it.

I am grateful that God has given me the privilege to serve as a priest. But, I am extremely grateful that God has called me to spend six of my ten years at this parish. Homecoming Sunday is a reminder about why this holy community is so amazing!

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