



## Father Michael G. Ryan

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ORDAINED 1966



*"I would simply ask people to reflect on what the Church means to them. Has the Church and her ministers been there for them at the important times of their life? Has the Church led them closer to Christ and given them the opportunities to grow in faith and love? Has the Church been there when the going was rough, as well as at the happy times?"*

*"If so, this campaign is a way to affirm this: to say that because the Church has been part of my life all along I want to give thanks for that. And I can certainly do that through prayer, but I can also do it financially – because that's one of the ways we show what we care about."*

FATHER  
MICHAEL G. RYAN  
*on the importance  
of the campaign*

What I came to understand over my 12-year journey to the priesthood is that priesthood means serving God through serving God's people. And it means humble service, nothing grandiose. It means loving God and loving God's people. And it's a call to look outward - beyond one's self.

I've come to know it as a joyful calling, too. There is joy in preaching the gospel and in helping awaken people to faith, and it's a joy and a privilege to minister to people at various moments of their lives - the happy moments, the sad moments, and everything in between. For me it has been a happy life and a rewarding one.

I've been serving as a priest for 51-plus years now and I still have energy for the ministry. It's not energy I give myself – it's clearly energy that God gives me. At age 77, serving as a priest still gives me energy. It's hard to explain but it's very real. When I'm offering Mass with the people on Sundays – usually several Masses – I don't seem to get tired. I get energized. That's a blessing from God.

I try to remember that the people I serve are earthen vessels like I am. As their pastor, I hope that when they come in the doors of the church they have a sense of belonging, of being at home, of being loved, accepted, forgiven. And I hope they feel embraced by God and as well as by the community. That's asking a lot, and I know it doesn't always happen, but when it does, it's a transforming experience for people.

We hold this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing power may be of God and not from us.

**2 CORINTHIANS 4:7**

*Favorite scripture passage*

