

## Living the Spirit To Serve God

Just as we have been created by God to know and love Him, we are created to serve Him in this life (world). He created us so that we can become worthy of eternal happiness, the reason for our existence. That happiness will be with God himself in ways so wonderful that all descriptions fail. In this insert I will write about serving God.

Almost by accident I just heard a rerun of a program by Father Benedict Groeschel on EWTN. He was speaking mostly about priests, and how they are being treated by others. He wanted to counteract the obvious campaign which has taken place of attacking priests as a means of attacking religion and even God Himself. He reminded us that our priests are ordained to serve us.

He mentioned that we Americans are a bit spoiled. We have many others serving us all along the way of our journey in life. We expect it. He mentioned how in other places there is so little that can be done to serve others – no goods to share. We expect good service when we go out to eat. We have many persons whose whole work is service. It is called the service industry.

How do we serve God? There is a principle that must be realized. We serve God by serving others. It pleases God for us to do so. There is another principle, too. We serve God by serving others in very ordinary ways most time. Of course, some serve with extraordinary vocations. I think here of those who give their lives to others in the foreign missions.

Have you ever thought how our Church in America is now relying on many who have come from foreign places, and now serve us so well? There are many jobs that seem to be done only by such persons. I also think of those priests who have come to us and serve our Church, its people, by living among us. Such priests clearly sacrifice so much. They give us the incomparable gift of the Eucharist, Christ present among and for us.

As a Church, which we see at times as an institution and at other times as the People of God, we are served by the Holy Father and our Bishops. What do they do for us? They teach us, govern us --to give order to our life of faith – and help us be holy. Yes, they bring us the certain possibility of being close to God by being close to them.

How do our priests serve in their vocation? Too often we make the mistake of thinking that priests are set apart from much of the human experience. We think their life is all peaches and cream, as the saying goes. A husband who has a nagging life would see the priest as having a great good in not having such a wife, such an experience in his journey from God to God. A wife could say the same about her husband, and think that a priest or Sister is really well off in the vocation. Husbands and wives serve each other and in doing so serve God. They serve children if God gives them that vocation. How? By making decisions for their children, by educating them, and even by making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches.

More than ever before in my lifetime priests have come to be perceived as poor human beings. The media take pains to write of every failure, magnifying it as much as possible. This has affected our young people, because they have not experienced how to value what the priest does to serve. I think of all the priests who have served me for many years. Only a priest has taken away my sins in confession. I like having them taken away, as I have to believe you do too. A priest started me out well by baptizing me. So many sacraments! So many graces! What about you?

I was fortunate to be educated by priests and Sisters. They gave me so much knowledge of the world that is good to have. My understanding of the faith came from their efforts more than from any other source. They helped me in my life again and again. If any young man would want to be a priest, I hope he would realize what service is yet to be given him. He must learn to receive that service so that he may himself be a servant, as God calls him to be.

Do priests only say Mass in the morning and then idle away their time? Hardly. I have seen priests who work many hours each day. So many are overburdened, especially now that priests are in short supply and are aging fast among us. I marvel at their ability to carry on when they meet opposition over difficult matters in parish life. How does one learn to serve without feeling aggrieved by such problems a priest may face? I have found this can be done only by prayer. I mention this to remind you that a priest is called to be a man of prayer for the people. He not only speaks for God but to God and does so for his people. That service is seen with faith as a true treasure for us as the People of God.

I could not write this insert without reminding you that in our time the Church has given us deacons. The word “diakonia” means service. They serve the Church, we say. But the Church is always a community (ecclesia) of people. They are an example of how through what seems very ordinary we serve others and so please God. Today they are needed more than ever in many ways. Often their work is humble and not all easy. We must encourage them to see the wide responsibilities their vocation has given them. We must pray for them, and give them our Christ-like love. How blessed we are with God’s gift!

Serving others can take many forms. I cannot write of them all. I do hope you see you are called to be the servant God wants you to be. Know that often you are the instrument of God, His hands to help others. Your smile serves as His smile to a person in need of a smile. Your ordinary caring and love reflects His love. One becomes holy only by serving God. Let us find ways to live the Spirit by serving as we can, and by serving come to know God and love Him and so deserve the happiness God waits to give us!

*God love and bless you always!*  
*Monsignor Morrison*