

Msgr. Ernie's golden Jubilee Mass + 5/22/16 + JMJ

On the fifth of November in the Year of Our Lord 1933 a son was born and his parents named him Earnest. I don't know why they chose that name but I do know that it was a providential decision for it would describe the singular trait of the boy who would be known as Ernie and the man who became Father Ernie and then Msgr Ernie.

The synonyms for earnest are: devout, heartfelt, sincere, impassioned, fervent, ardent, intense, urgent. Doesn't that describe our golden jubilarian?

Now this is not meant to be a eulogy because for one thing Msgr Ernie is still very much alive! Secondly our Lord said only God is good of Himself. Still God delights in letting His goodness shine through His people, and whatever goodness we see in others is meant to give glory to God. As psalm 115 declares: "Not to us O Lord, not to us, but to Your name give the glory!"

Msgr Ernie has been earnest about everything he has done in his life, including and especially when it comes to the way he pursued and continues to live his priesthood.

He has been earnest about serving Christ and His Church. He has been earnest about his fidelity to the pope and his bishop and to all his priestly duties, great and small.

He has been earnest about his love for God and country and would have gladly dedicated his life to being a military chaplain but the Lord had other plans for him.

Monsignor has been earnest in upholding the truth, especially the truth of the teachings of the Church. Now being earnest about the truth can sometimes be misunderstood for a kind of fierceness. There is an old saying that a priest should be a lion in the pulpit but a lamb in the Confessional. To know Monsignor is to know that if he occasionally roared from the pulpit he was always gentle as a lamb in the Confessional. For he has been above all earnest about communicating trust in God's mercy. So it is very fitting that his golden jubilee should coincide with the Jubilee year of Mercy.

Our merciful Savior has used this priest of His to give us an example of dedication and single minded service. He has formed him to be a pastor who has never lost that sense of wonder of his vocation.

All that earnestness has fueled an energy that belies Monsignor's age. He has cut himself very little slack in doing his daily duties despite times of sickness, pain or fatigue. His secret I think is what the prophet Isaiah said about those who trust in the Lord: They shall renew their strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not grow faint.

Monsignor, we are all here to thank God the Father for calling you to share in the one priesthood of His Son, Jesus Christ, our great High Priest. We thank you for your YES to that call 50 years ago and for the countless ways you have renewed that YES over the past 5 decades.

At the Offertory of this Mass we lift up with you to the Father through the Son in the unity of the Holy Spirit all the Masses you have offered and all the Holy Communion that you have

distributed; all the Confessions you have heard and absolutions you have given; all the baptisms, anointings, all the sick calls and visits to the dying; all the counsel that you have given to the troubled and all the instructions in the faith that you have taught.

On this Trinity Sunday we marvel that you must have 50 homilies on the Trinity under your belt, or shall we say, under your cincture. You have led us countless times in giving glory to God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, and you have helped us rejoice in our common dignity as sons and daughters of the Father, brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, temples of the Holy Spirit.

May that quality of earnestness rub off on us in the daily living of our own vocation, and may we be earnest in praying for Msgr Ernie that he continues to have a fruitful ministry as a priest who acts in the person of Christ in the Church and in our world, fulfilling his role in how God will bring about the fulfillment of the Kingdom of Heaven.

And I offer this prayer for you Msgr Ernie and for all our brother priests who have joined you today:

Eternal Father, I lift up to You all the priests of the world. Sanctify us. Heal and guide us. Mold us into the likeness and holiness of Your Son, JESUS, The Eternal High Priest. Mary, Mother and Queen of the Clergy, keep all priests under your protective mantle. Amen.