

# In Honor of Priests

Paul M. Hebert

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*Speech - Dec. 21, 1949 - at luncheon  
honoring Father Rowland*

This is a solemn and significant occasion. It is one of joy and of happiness for Father Rowland, for his family and for his friends who were gathered today to attend his first Solemn offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. We rejoice with him today and especially do we rejoice with and congratulate his parents on this occasion. To see one's son, a priest of God, must be the joy complete of Catholic parenthood; so, we are happy, indeed, for Colonel and Mrs. Rowland today - realizing full well the meaning and the joy of this occasion for them.

To a fortunate few, there comes by divine inspiration a vocation - the divine vocation by which God selects some to become his special ministers, endowing them with the spiritual, mental, moral and physical qualities required for the fitting discharge of their holy order and inspiring them to adorn the ecclesiastical state for His honor and their own satisfaction. Such a one we honor in Father Rowland. Why do we Catholics revere and honor our priests? It is because in the Catholic priesthood is found the true succession to the priesthood of Christ Himself. Christ not only merited

the grace to redeem mankind by His sacrifice but he also gave to the holy priesthood a power that will be continued until the end of time. Today we are brought once again very close to this supernatural power as a newly ordained priest of God celebrates his first mass. We are brought to realize the significance of the life-giving and immortal words \*\*\*\*\* "...as the Father hath sent me, I also send you"; and again "Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."

We Catholics of the Faith honor our priests, believing what has been so well expressed by Thomas á Kempis:

"Oh how great and honorable is the office of the priests, to whom it is given to consecrate the Sacrament of the Lord of majesty with holy words, to bless it with the lips, to hold it in their hands, to receive it with their mouth, and to administer it to others! Oh how clean ought those hands to be, how pure the mouth, how holy the body, how unspotted the heart of the priest, to whom so often the Author of purity entereth in! From the mouth of the priest ought naught to proceed but what is holy, what is honest and profitable, because he so often

receiveth the Sacrament of Christ. \*\*\* To priests is it specially said in the Law, Be ye holy for I the Lord your God am holy."

As we reflect upon the holy priesthood - we are joyful today at this great event in the life of our young friend, Father Rowland; we rejoice in the spiritual power that is his; we rejoice in the confidence that he is indelibly marked as a minister of Christ and fortified with the sanctifying grace needed to make him a fit and holy minister of the sacraments; our hearts overflow with joy as we realize that he will, through his holy office, be the instrumentality for bringing souls to God. To Father Rowland, we wish that health which will mean long years of service at the altar; and all of the happiness that will be his as a worthy priest of the Catholic Church.

Right Reverend Monsignor - members of the clergy - Father Foret -  
parents and friends of Father Foret :

At the request of our beloved Pastor, Monsignor Gauci, I have  
a pleasant duty to perform at this time in the name of Sacred Heart Parish.  
We all feel, with a deep and abiding conviction, I am sure, that our  
Parish has been greatly enriched spiritually this afternoon. We have been  
privileged to welcome Father Foret back to Sacred Heart and to share with  
him, on this occasion, the joy and the priceless graces and blessings that  
flow to all of us from his celebration here in our Parish of his Solemn Mass  
of thanksgiving in commemoration of his ordination to the priesthood.

Father Foret's friends in Baton Rouge have all noted, sometimes  
from afar, how his vocation has flowered, how it has been nurtured and care-  
fully cultivated by his Bishop, how it has been sustained and encouraged by  
the devotion, support and sacrifice of his loving parents who have given  
him so willingly to God's work and whose justifiable pride in his holy  
calling of the priesthood furnishes such a shining example of Catholic  
parenthood in its finest and highest aspect.

To the beauty of today's occasion, therefore, there is little that  
could be added. There are no words that I could utter which would add to the  
profound thoughts and to the inspiration so brilliantly reflected in  
Father Gremillion's eloquent sermon on the mystical body at the Solemn Mass.  
We feel, however, that Father Foret is a part of Catholic Baton Rouge and we in  
Sacred Heart Parish can truly share with him and with his family the vibrant  
happiness of a great occasion. We rejoice in the privileges that have been  
his - of the high distinction of being selected to study at the North American  
College in Rome; of the honor of his having been ordained in the ancient and  
eternal city, the true seat of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church  
founded by our blessed Savior. We rejoiced at the thought last December, that  
his parents could be with him at his ordination in Rome and we rejoice again  
today in a spirit of gratitude to him for coming to our Parish today to permit  
us all to share with him the spiritual riches with which the Good Giver, in  
his abundance, always blesses the work of his newly ordained priests.

Father Foret - on this occasion, as a tangible expression of the esteem, respect, admiration and affection which your Parish entertains for you, it is a pleasure to present to you this gift from Sacred Heart Parish. We hope you will accept it with the knowledge that there goes with it the best wishes of the Pastor, the Clergy and the Parish for all of the spiritual successes in your work for souls which most certainly will crown your future efforts. Our prayers will also abide with you and with the further objective, that the example of perseverance you have shown may be an inspiration to others who may also aspire to the Lord's vineyard where the Harvest is so great with the laborers all too few. We congratulate you and our dear friends, your parents, and we express the hope that you will ever consider Sacred Heart Parish in Baton Rouge as one of your second homes. May God bless your every work!

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

July 21, 1957

(Remarks of Paul M. Hebert, K.S.G. and Lay Committeemen of Sacred Heart Church on the occasion Father Foret's Solemn Mass)

Greetings from the laity  
to  
Right Reverend Monsignor Paul J. Gauci  
on the occasion of  
The Parochial Reception  
in honor of his elevation to the rank of  
Domestic Prelate

Sacred Heart Parish  
November 21, 1954

Right Reverend Monsignor Cauel, Right Reverend Monsignor, Revered Members of the Clergy and Religious, Fellow Parishioners of Sacred Heart Parish:

In the institutional life of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, there are days especially appointed as days of glorious joy even as there are the appointed times and seasons emphasizing sorrow and the spirit of penance. Similarly, in the history of each parochial unit of the Church, there are occasions for special joy; and, it is such an occasion that brings us together this evening as Parishioners of Sacred Heart. We gather with joy in our hearts today, motivated by sentiments of filial love and devotion, to express to our beloved pastor our congratulations upon the high ecclesiastical honor that the Holy Father, in his wisdom, has so fittingly bestowed upon him. This is, therefore, a day of joy, a day upon which we, as parishioners, may pause to take account of the many blessings we have enjoyed under our Pastor's spiritual and temporal guidance and afford some outward manifestation of the esteem, respect and gratitude that we have for him by virtue of his sterling qualities as a priest and for his untiring work in our midst.

Just a week ago today he was formally invested with all the dignity of his appointment as Domestic Prelate. There is an intervening story. He came to Sacred Heart Parish in June of 1948 as Father Cauel, the new pastor, taking up the work of an illustrious predecessor of happy memory. He came to us with a record of enviable accomplishments as Pastor of St. Ann's Church of Morganza, where he served for ten years following outstanding work, first in Donaldsonville, and later at St. Rose de Lima and at St. James Major Churches. In his six years as Pastor of our Parish, he has demonstrated his constant zeal for the souls intrusted to his care and he has established a record of administrative accomplishments of which we may be justly proud. Under his leadership the Parish has gone from strength to strength; the



church building improved, beautified and made more comfortable; the school, with its added facilities and cafeteria, has been expanded into a powerful force for Catholic education in our City; the new Convent, for many years only a dream, is now on the threshold of reality.

In His infinite mercy, Almighty God has been good to the people of Sacred Heart and to their Parish. He has been good in providing our Parish with such a Pastor and in inspiring the numerous good works in our Parish. Accomplishments such as we have witnessed do not simply happen - they reflect the planning, the prayers, the work, the heartaches and the leadership that go into making each such accomplishment a reality. In our Pastor we have a leader who has the courage, the vision and the ability to carry out those measures within the Parish that will be conducive to our own spiritual welfare and to the welfare of our children and our children's children.

We know that elevation to the prelature is an ecclesiastical recognition based on sterling merit. We, who have enjoyed at first hand, the fruits of that merit so recognized, have double reason then to rejoice on this occasion as we greet our Pastor and extend to him our sincere felicitations.

Monsignor Gauci, in the name of the laity, I find that I cannot give adequate expression to the depth of the sentiments of joy that are present in the hearts and minds of your parishioners today. Those who have learned to love you as Father Gauci, rejoice because your work in our midst has been evaluated by the highest authority in the Church and it has been found to be so good that you have been attached to the family and retinue of the Holy Father. Your parishioners feel that in honoring you, great honor has been done to Sacred Heart Parish as well. Henceforth, as you carry the title and rank

of the prelature, and wear the robes that are symbolic of that high office, we of the laity will continue to rejoice in your merited distinction and honor. In the twenty-seven fruitful years since your ordination, the success you have enjoyed in every parochial assignment, bears eloquent testimony to your zeal as a priest. These accomplishments, in letters of gold, are written in the Book of Life and their accumulated message, most assuredly, is pleasing to Him who is the Giver of all Good Gifts. As we express our congratulations to you today and give utterance to the joy in our hearts over your high ecclesiastical honor, may we ask that same Giver of Good Gifts to preserve and keep you to the end that we of Sacred Heart Parish may continue to enjoy the fruits of your labors in your priestly vocation; and, may your work as a priest always bring you the complete happiness you so richly deserve.

Our congratulations and best wishes are with you from our hearts and your parishioners will not fail to remember you in their prayers. May God bless your every undertaking.