

# Reflection on my 60<sup>th</sup> Year of Priesthood

Rev. Peter Chiang

I wrote this reflection, not out of my own personal intention, but simply in response to my best friends' request and encouragement. My reflection could be summarized in the following three main points: gratitude to God's work on me, thanksgiving for His blessings and grace, and my whole-hearted commitment to evangelization.

## 1. "You did not choose me, but I chose you." (Jn 15:16)

Since my entry into the seminary at age of 10 till my friends' preparing for the celebration of my 60-year priesthood on May 30 this year, I have been remembering Jesus' teaching- "You did not choose me, but I chose you." Many people, driven by their concern and care, ask me, "How do you know it's God who calls you into the seminary and becoming a priest?" Truly speaking, I knew nothing at all while I was entering the seminary. But now, I have fully understood Jesus' teaching, and know that He really chose me.

Since I have experienced a lot of adversity in my life such as horrible wars, merciless bombings, trembling and chaotic situations, mass migration from one place to another for the safety of the brothers in the seminary, and the protection of their calling, I firmly believe that, without the Lord's

mercy and His loving care, it was impossible for me to keep His calling. For 5 years after my move from China to Spain, I was ordained a priest together with another 32 deacons. Then, I was assigned to do my pastoral work at Malaysia and Brunei for 30 years. Afterwards, I came to Vancouver, Canada and worked as a pastor for 22 years! Those adversity and migration that I came across could not prevent me from fulfilling my dream of becoming a priest who could serve in various regions as a pastor. This is how God chose me, and I proved it through His holy love and caring, which is



the most unforgettable fact in my life. Because of this, I have to express my gratitude to God for His great love and calling.

## 2. "I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Mt 28:20)

For the past 60 years, I can say that God, due to His presence with me everyday, has helped me solve problems, no matter big or small. Today, while I look back to the past, I believe I have truly experienced God's always walking with me, like His hidden pairs of powerfully loving hands often holding me and assisting me to pass every hurdle - such as the frustration and helplessness in my spiritual life, the suffering and grievance, the physical tiredness, desperateness, sickness, failure

of medication, cardiovascular surgery etc. God healed me soon after the happening of all these unfortunate incidents, and this astonished me from time to time.

Quite often, I shared with parishioners of Jesus' generous promise," And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold, and will inherit eternal life. " (Mt 19:29)

Wherever I was doing my pastoral work, I could personally experience the fulfillment of Jesus' promise. For the moment while my friends were preparing for the celebration of my 60-year priesthood, I could fully experience and well receive the fruits of His promise.

In solitude at night, I am able to reminisce the journey of my life - coming across joy, pains, success and failure. But, under the intensive care of God, I could fulfill every responsibility of a priest, mainly because of my full reliance on God. Joyfully and faithfully I express my gratitude to God's grace and blessings.

**3. "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses .....and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)**

Everytime when I reminisce my pastoral work in the past, my strongest aspiration was to evangelize. For me, the major responsibility of my priesthood is to share the gospel with others. When a person became a catechumen, it would be the greatest joy for me ever. It is definitely that

God's love is so great that our human intelligence is unable to comprehend. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but may have eternal life." (Jn 3:16). As a matter of fact, since many people in our world did not know Jesus in the past, and still many do not know Him even now, popes of different centuries voiced out loudly that every baptized catholic should become the life witness of the risen Christ. For me, I always share with the enthusiastic parishioners of this aspiration in order to sow the seeds of gospel speedily into the heart of everyone who could achieve eternal life.

That is the actual reason and intention of my writing this reflection of my 60-year priesthood. I deeply wish that every Catholic who loves Jesus will act like the two disciples at Emmaus. When Jesus vanished from their sights, they said to each other," Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?"(Lk 24:32) These two disciples got up and returned to Jerusalem immediately and shared the good news of the risen Christ. Here I wish you, as a reader, could have such kind of joy that you are, with a sense of urgency, willing to share our free and precious faith with others.

I deeply thank for those best wishes and greetings given to me and I pray to God that everyone of you can live out your real faith in your daily life. Praise and thanks to God!

