



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

CELEBRATING OUR IMMEDIATE AND EXTENDED FAMILIES

Fr. Bill Verbryke, SJ
DEVELOPMENT EXECUTIVE BOARD

In recent years ordination to priestly ministry for Jesuits in the Chicago Province has fallen between Mother's Day and Father's Day. Though ordination isn't scheduled in early June because of its proximity to these holidays, it's a fitting place for it, because families play an absolutely fundamental role in the work of the Society of Jesus.

Ordination is a powerful celebration for the Church, for the Society of Jesus, for the ordinand, and for his family. The ordinand's parents, brothers, and sisters will be partners in everything he does as a Jesuit. That has certainly been the case in my life. My mother, my brothers and sisters, my nieces and nephews, my in-laws and their families have offered their unyielding love and support since I entered the Jesuits.

This year's ordination is unique in that an uncle and nephew are being ordained together. Years ago it wasn't uncommon to have more than one child in a family choose to become a Jesuit. There were many brothers and cousins who served, and in some cases

continue to serve, together in the Society.

Today as the number of vocations in this country decreases, it seems unlikely that we will have many ceremonies in which family members will be ordained together in the near future. I know the staff of Partners is highlighting many of the family relationships in the Society in this issue, and this year's family ordination is certainly cause for celebration.

But it's important to also be mindful of the fact that every ordination is a "family affair." The wider Jesuit family includes Jesuit friends and benefactors as well as the ordinand's extended family. Every Jesuit is ordained with the prayers, encouragement, and financial support of this "family," and that partnership makes much of the Society's work possible. So, as we continue to celebrate the ordination of Fr. Bill O'Brien, SJ, and his uncle, Fr. Tom O'Brien, SJ, it's important also to continue to humbly celebrate the support we receive from our immediate and extended families.

