



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

Ordination to priestly ministry brings to mind many of the experiences of preparing for it. I remember, for example, a course in the theologate that had us videotape ourselves presiding at various liturgical functions. Among the men and women, Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish seminarians in the classes, there was always a need for ‘extras,’ or persons who would assume the role of beneficiary of the particular liturgical service. Though I could never quite figure out why, I was once asked to be the ‘beneficiary’ of a taped service which happened to be a wake.

Surprisingly, I found myself really moved and deeply comforted by those who gathered to offer prayers and blessings for me at my “wake.” That experience helped set the stage for the high point of my own ordination; lying face down in the midst of the People of God as they prayed movingly the Litany of the Saints. Both experiences unforgettably and powerfully uplifted me and nourished my soul. Many of my Jesuit brothers tell me that they, too, found the prostration a profoundly moving part of the ordination ceremony.

I continue to value and hold dear the ongoing realization that the faith of those gathered in prayer brings a most powerful presence of our gracious and compassionate God. “Where two or three are gathered in my name,” said Jesus, “there am I in the midst of them.” You who gather with your extraordinary gifts of faith might not be aware of what you bring into the pew with you. It’s a hint of what we celebrated at Pentecost.

Former provincial, Dan Flaherty, recently offered a moving and insightful prayer for this church of ours at a staff meeting the day after Pentecost. In this



Bill and Tom O’Brien, SJ, lay prostrate on the floor of Madonna della Strada while the People of God pray the Litany of the Saints during their ordination on June 8, 2002.

time of trial and self-searching for our Church, Dan prayed that the Spirit of God breathe new life into her and “renew the face of the earth.” He poignantly concluded his petition asking that the vision and fire of those who gathered for the Second Vatican Council reawaken us now to courageously rebuild what has been damaged and mightily restore what has been lost.

Gathering with Bill and Tom O’Brien at their ordinations, we not only have a wonderful opportunity to celebrate our magnificent gift of faith, but we’re also invited to once again be uplifted with them through the Spirit of God and sing ever more heartily in prayers of renewed joy and hope. With your great gift of faith and your generous benefactions, all of you have helped make this celebration possible for Bill and Tom, their families, friends, and fellow Jesuits. Thank you.

John Castells, SJ

