

Your Excellency, Bishop Thomas. Honored Jubilarian.

My friends, it is a beautiful day and each one here is a beautiful person. How special it is for us to gather to celebrate the golden anniversary of the priestly ordination of Father William J. Greytak. It was on July first 1956 in Louvain, Belgium, that William Greytak answered the invitation of his bishop with one word “*Adsum*” --- “I am present” he said. Ready and willing. Since then, for fifty years, Father Greytak has shared the ministerial priesthood of Jesus. He has done so as teacher, priest and shepherd of God’s people here in the Diocese of Helena.

As a priest, Father Bill preached the Gospel; with dedication he celebrated the sacraments of our faith, especially the Holy Eucharist. And he has spent a major portion of his priesthood as teacher and friend both for his students and for his faculty colleagues at Carroll College. Today is a time for special thanksgiving to God. One can only imagine the innumerable graces God has bestowed upon Father Greytak during these years since ordination and even before. We know his vocation came from a family and was fostered by a community of faith and love. In our thanksgiving today we honor Father Bill’s parents, Steve and Marie Greytak, his brothers Steve and Al and his entire extended family here in Montana and beyond.

It is a happy and blessed time today for our whole diocesan church, especially for the people of God here in Saint Catherine’s Parish, Boulder. With Saint Paul, we can say of Father Greytak: *“I thank God whenever I think of you. I pray with joy, remembering how you have helped to spread the Good News from the day you first heard of it right up to the present.”*

Father Bill’s ministry as priest has included his nearly half-century service at Carroll College as a professor of history, faculty dean, and trustee. These years at Carroll were interrupted only by his five-year tenure as rector of the North American College at the Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium --- Louvain is the world’s oldest continuous Catholic University. As rector, he was responsible for the education of American students who came there to prepare for ordination to the priesthood. Father Greytak has the unique distinction of returning personal service to the two primary educational institutions where he himself first studied --- Carroll College in Montana and the North American College in Louvain, Belgium.

In the years of service at Carroll, Father Bill has also completed regular weekly assignments as substitute priest for many parishes of the diocese. In addition, he has served as administrator of Sacred Heart Mission in Wolf Creek, St. Thomas and St. Jude parishes in Helmville and Lincoln and now since 1992 as pastor here at St. Catherine’s. Father Greytak, the many people you have served join me with your family and friends in wishing you every blessing on your fiftieth jubilee year.

“AD MULTOS ANNOS”

In its decree on the ministry and life of the priest, the Second Vatican Council reminds us that priests are taken from among men and appointed for service to people in the things which pertain to God. The priest deals with others as his brothers and sisters. This was the way that Jesus, the Son of God, a man sent by the Father, who dwelt among us, was set apart for the Gospel of God. One is not born with all the skills it takes to complete the responsibility of priesthood. Under the Spirit, much development occurs throughout one's life, even before ordination.

“BUTTE DAILY POST, PAPER POST” “EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT”

As a child his strong work ethic brought Billy Greytak to the corners of the busy streets in downtown Butte selling the evening newspaper. For him this meant a mile walk each way each day from his home to pick up the papers to sell. And he had to get there early to stake out the best corner to get the good customers. Then, when old enough following high school, Bill and his friend, Jim, worked as partners in the underground mines of Butte. As a team of two, much ore was moved, sometimes with shovel-in-hand, from the ore bins into the train cars headed for the smelter. Oh, Bishop Thomas and friends, the stories that can be told growing up in the mining city in the 1940s!

When Bill Greytak came to Carroll in 1948 as a freshman, it was then that many of the rest of us learned there was another municipality located on that hill of mines. Bill always maintained he was from Walkerville, not Butte. The Butte guys got a geography lesson. The City of Walkerville and the home on O'Neill Street were there, high up on the *“richest hill on earth.”*

At the time of his ordination, Father Greytak was *already* 25 years old and had been in school for twenty of those years. So, recognizing his talents and years of education, Bishop Joseph M. Gilmore assigned Father Greytak to teach at 'his' college. This included teaching subjects for which he was not necessarily prepared; but the Bishop always maintained, *“My priests can do anything”* --- and they did or sometimes they just had to. Besides teaching Spanish and French, Father Greytak was also appointed Dean of Men, a kind of job on the side that required overseeing the discipline and welfare of all the male students. The system governing the life of college students in the 1950's was, to say the least, regimented by today's standards. It included compulsory Mass attendance, regular study hours, and even bed checks with a flashlight. The Dean of Men saw to it all. *“Charlie Heartattack”* was the nickname the students gave Father, for reasons of their own. It was during his tenure as Dean of Men that Father developed his skills at diagnosing illness. As Dean, he had to deal with ailments the men of St. Charles Hall might have. When a student reported sick, Father surmised it must be either the flu or food poisoning. This facility at diagnosing illness has remained with Father Greytak to this day. Even now when confronted with his own sometimes serious health issues, he will most likely self-diagnose and dismiss the problem as either food poisoning or the flu!

It was during these early years at the college that Father Greytak earned two master's degrees: one in Romance and Literature from the University of Michigan and one in Modern European History from the University of California at Berkeley. In 1967, he earned his doctorate in Modern European History from the University of Colorado. This brought him full measure from his start as instructor of Spanish and French to his love of European history. Here his gifts as teacher and mentor for college students blossomed. I can tell you that his academic adventure has been truly rewarding for our college. So many things to say! His daily celebration of the Eucharist on campus --- His availability to students --- His own high standards for himself and his students --- His example of the rewards that come from diligent study and hard work --- All this has built upon and strengthened the life of excellence at Carroll College. Father Bill: *For your many years of service to higher education as priest and teacher and professor of history, we say thank you, Father Greytak!*

And, it is good to know that even now, following his retirement from the college, as a senior status priest he has continued to teach one course in history each Fall Semester.

Now, today, his ministry as pastor at St. Catherine's Parish is the main focus of his priesthood. Father Greytak has found great satisfaction in being a parish priest in Boulder, Montana. It is here that he continues his life of service.

In a recent interview for the "*Montana Catholic*," Father Greytak stated how proud he is of the incredible effort the families of his parish have made in building the new pastoral center here on the parish grounds. He said in the interview, "*We had to raise the half million dollars ourselves.*" This the parish did over several years through fundraisers and donations from the community and from religious organizations. Now the parish center is complete and ready to meet the pastoral and social needs of our church and the Boulder community as well. Father Bill: *For your leadership, especially for your loving ministry as priest and pastor, we say thank you, Father Greytak!*

My friends, the ordination of every priest is a blessed event worthy of our joy, welcoming care and prayerful attention. Especially after fifty years of faithful ministry, the date of an anniversary of ordination is a time to pause from our usual busyness. It is an occasion for celebration and rejoicing. When someone has the confidence to take up the challenging life of a priest, it is the beginning of something that no human being can finish alone. It is God's grace that must finish what God has begun. God, who called this priest to this responsibility, is true to His word and His graces are given without reserve. As we honor Father Greytak today and as we thank him, let us pray for all priests and let us pray too that God will grace others and send more workers to the harvest.

**May God be with everyone here as we continue this jubilee celebration today!
Thank you.**

Rev. Msgr. Joseph D. Harrington
July 2, 2006