

Father Gene Murphy

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I, I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference.

-Robert Frost

Choosing to become a priest is a long arduous journey. It is not taken by many, but for those who heed the call, it is a path of prayer, reflection, hope and discovery.

Fr. Gene Murphy's path to where he is now has taken many twists and turns. He has lived a full, rich life replete with life experiences that some disparage and some argue make him better able to relate to the everyday trials & tribulations of those in his congregation. He has been very open with all of us about his past and often weaves the threads of his former life into his homilies.

Great responsibility was thrust upon Fr. Gene as a rookie priest. He stepped up and not once has he shied from his responsibilities. He has met his first year and a half as a priest with hard-work, humility, and a strong dose of "New-Yawk" humor.

Born in the Bronx, he was the youngest child of Irish immigrants, Bridgid and Ambrose Murphy. Fr. Gene has no memory of his father who died when Fr. Gene was only two. His mother, whom he describes as the ultimate Irish matriarch, ran a tight ship for the three Murphy kids

As a teen, Gene Murphy, answered the call to be a priest. "When I was a boy I wanted to be a priest, that's all I wanted to be, I didn't want to be a fireman, I didn't want to be a cowboy. I wanted to be a priest."

At 14 he went away to the seminary; in Fr. Gene's words it was a "catastrophe". He did not feel he belonged and he left after a very short time. His disillusionment with for the Church grew and after high school he stepped away completely. He married a childhood sweetheart and they had a son, Brian. They divorced after 12 years of marriage and spent years bitterly, tussling over Brian. In 1982 he remarried, outside the church, and moved to the Twin Cities



went away to college

"She and I remembered why we liked each other so much in the first place, and since then she's been my best friend."

On a visit to Tucson visiting Brian, Joan and her husband, Joan offered Fr. Gene a ride to the airport if he agreed to go to church with her first. He reluctantly agreed and it was there, at St. Patrick church in Scottsdale, where he heard musicians and the choir sing the song "All Are Welcome." In his words, he completely lost it. Afterwards at brunch with Joan, as they discussed his search for direction, she said, "Well why don't you do what you were always supposed to do - become a priest?" He remembers smirking and thinking, I'm 57, "That's the dumbest thing I've ever heard." An hour later on the plane back to Minnesota it came back to him and "exploded in my head -- I spilled water on the person next to me as I nearly leaped out of my seat." He waited nearly a year, but the idea would simply not go away. By this time, he had become an actively involved, "with the zeal of the converted," member at Pax Christi Parish in Eden Prairie. He talked to a friend who was a Franciscan Priest who urged him to go to

where he worked as a stockbroker and in banking for 23 years. His life took yet another turn, when his second wife left him.

In the intervening years, his first wife, Joan remarried and moved with Brian to Tucson. Years before Fr. Gene and Joan had reached a truce when they found that they had nothing to fight about when Brian

San Antonio to become a Franciscan.

A year in San Antonio taught him two things: He wanted to be a priest, but not a Franciscan priest. Searching the web he found Sacred Heart School of Theology in Hales Corners, Wisconsin, a seminary that specialized in "older guys." "I called them and asked what dioceses send guys to you? After listing off about twenty, I stopped him at Superior. I'd lived in the Twin Cities so I knew the area and I knew that's just where I wanted to be"

"By the way, Joan has no memory of saying, 'Why don't you do what you were meant to do and become a priest?' It's called a Theophony; it's a really interesting thing where God speaks directly to us through other people and it happens all the time to all of us."

Father Gene wears many hats. He is a father who adores his son. He is a man who successfully navigated the business world. He is a priest. He was ordained on June 6, 2010, and he has been here at St. Patrick parish ever since. He baptizes babies, officiates and blesses marriages, hears our sins, celebrates the Eucharist, counsels those in need, visits and comforts the sick and dying. He is our Parish administrator, the leader of all our ministries, our school and our faith formation. "I just have the best job in the whole world... I get to help people, I get to participate in the major events of their lives."



Father John Gerritts

Fr. John Gerritts will be joining us as pastor on January 2. He currently is the pastor at Nativity of Our Lord parish in Rhinelander and is finishing up several projects there before he can transfer to Hudson. He is excited to be coming and has stated several times he looks forward to being our pastor and remaining with us for many years. We all look forward to welcoming Fr. John and his ministry.

Perhaps he relates so well to those who are suffering because he fights his own battles. In January, after the arrival of Fr. John Gerritts, Fr. Gene will undergo what sounds like a quest to become the Bionic man. He has a knee replacement and a hip replacement scheduled and some spinal issues to be looked after. "I can't help but think of all the wonderful things God has done for me ... pain teaches you. I don't think I'll be drafted by the NFL this year, maybe next year."

In July he will be given a new assignment by the bishop. He will leave with our gratitude for stepping into his role at a time we desperately needed a priest with humility, business acumen, and humor. God always has a plan. Fr. Gene searched for answers and the Holy Spirit intervened to remind him and coax him back onto that initial road.

SchoolNews

Merry Christmas!

Today we celebrate the birth of Jesus as a parish family.

Thank you for being here. During the past weeks the

students and staff of St. Patrick School have presented three Christmas pageants, each proclaiming the true meaning of this day: Jesus Christ is born.

For over 150 years, St. Patrick School has lived the message of Jesus. We are committed to building a partnership between parents, students, staff, and our parish to help each child reach their full potential. We are dedicated to providing a Catholic education that nurtures the minds and souls of students. Thank you for your commitment to Catholic Education. We look forward to the new year and to celebrating Catholic Schools Week with you. May your Christmas season be filled with joy.



Welcome! Thank you for being here with us.