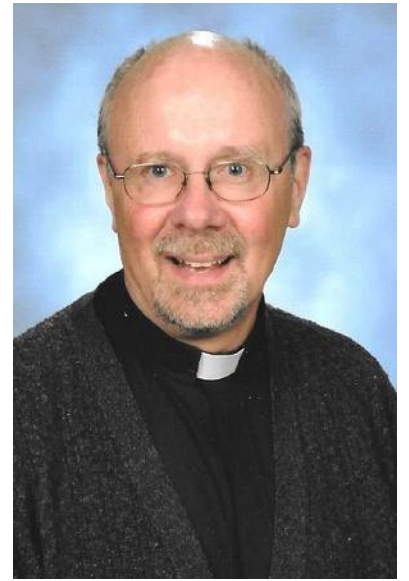


X-Rays    Howdy!

I write to you, the people of St. Roch's parish, with these two words that will tell you a little about me and get me going as your new pastor.

First, 'X-Rays.' I was, prior to entering the seminary, an X-Ray Technician, training at a local hospital in Warren, Mi. I worked in this field for a few years and then when I had entered the seminary (Sacred Heart College, in Detroit) I lived at a couple of parishes during the summer months to gain some experience of priestly ministry. One of my pastors invited me to write an article as a seminarian and I chose X-Rays, it being a part of my name, but also part of my then-profession.



"Howdy" comes from saying "Hi or Hello" in another kind of way. I didn't grow up in the country or on a farm or ranch but just adopted "Howdy," which is many times interpreted as "how are you," and people give me an update of their person. But for me, it is simply my way of saying 'hello.' So "Howdy" to all of you!

Perhaps this is also where I can begin - simply. Simply put, I am your new pastor, 60 years old, 30 years ordained as a priest and 21 years a pastor. I am one of three children - two sisters: one older and one younger than me, growing up on the east-side of Detroit (not East Detroit, now Eastpointe, but on the east side, Eight Mile Road and Gratiot.) It was a beautiful neighborhood with lots of kids, as much of Detroit and its suburbs were in the 1950's and 1960's.

I attended our parish grade school (St. Raymond's, thus my name), sang in boy's choir, was a Cub and Boy Scout, played some ball and then attended St. Anthony High School. In my freshman year, we were told we were merging (this is 1968-69) with two other high schools. We formed East Catholic H.S. After graduating (1972), I attended Oakland University hoping to earn a degree in Biology. But during these years something occurred. I wasn't making the grades in college, found life in X-ray work as a porter, met and made many new friends, applied for the X-Ray school position, was accepted, finished training and took my state licensure, passed and had a good future. But something was hanging there in front of me that I finally noticed and responded to - priesthood.

I sheepishly told my parents, was confronted by my sisters and told them what I wished to do, study to be a priest! It would be 7 years of schooling - college and graduate school - before I would be ordained, but that went by rather quickly. On June 22, 1985 Abp. Szoka (the late Cardinal Szoka) ordained two others and me to the priesthood.

I spent my first seven years as an associate pastor in two large parishes with grade schools and then was sent to study Canon Law (to become a canon Lawyer within the Church). But (church) law wasn't for me and I asked to return home and was made an administrator of a parish. During this time away in study, I realized where my talents lie is in parish work - being a backyard priest, as I like saying, or being a jack of all trades and certainly, master of none! (although I have earned two Master's degrees, one in Divinity - the degree necessary for ordination and another in Counseling).

But I enjoy parish life and work, helping folks through rough times, preparing them for long-life times and/or celebrating immediate times. This is what I want to do with you and for you (as priest, as pastor) celebrate these times (together).

I like writing a weekly article and so you will find out more about me in the "times to come." Do take care and God's blessings.

*-Father Ray Lewandowski*