

Rhode Island Catholic

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Bringing Humor to the Priesthood 25 Years Later

SPECIAL TO RHODE ISLAND CATHOLIC

CRANSTON — Recently, Father William J. Ledoux celebrated the 25th anniversary of his ordination



FATHER LEDOUX

to the priesthood. Father Ledoux says he cannot believe “how fast time has flown. It honestly feels like just yesterday I was a seminarian.”
F a t h e r Ledoux is a born and bred Rhode Islander who grew up in Pawtucket. He attended Woodlawn Catholic Regional School and St. Raphael Academy before going off to Rhode Island College, unsure if he would join the priesthood. For a time, he thought he might become a grammar school teacher. Ultimately, through the love and support of his family, gentle guidance from the Sisters of Mercy and prayer, Father Ledoux decided to take the vows of the priesthood.

Commencing his studies at St. Vincent House of Formation and completing them at St. Mary’s Seminary in Baltimore, Father Ledoux headed back to Rhode Island to serve the community that raised him.

Father Ledoux previously served as assistant pastor at SS. John &

Paul Church in Coventry and St. Matthew Church in Cranston, as well as pastor of St. Mary Church in Pawtucket. He is currently the pastor at St. Mary Church in Cranston, where he has served for the past six years. He is known in all of the parishes he has served to have a great sense of humor and an infectious laugh.

“I like to use my sense of humor when interacting with parishioners to make this atmosphere unique,” Father Ledoux said. “I believe that has helped me be a successful priest.”

“And I also love to laugh,” he added jovially.

Working at St. Mary for the past six years has made him “ecstatic” because of the great history of the parish and the strong family traditions that bind the community. St. Mary was formed by Italian immigrants in the early 20th century.

“Faith and family are strongly intertwined here at St. Mary’s,” Father Ledoux said. “Those two factors are what make a parish special.”

Priests are an essential component of one’s faith experience in the church, not just because they offer the Eucharist at Mass or give confession, but because they can enter into an individual’s life at any stage, often when people need help the most. When asked about what he enjoys most about the priesthood, Father Ledoux noted that being able to connect



with people from diverse backgrounds in any part of their lives is special. From baptisms, to leading teens through confirmation, marrying loving adults or being there for someone’s final moments, all these experiences encapsulate “the gifts of the priesthood.”

While the Catholic Church has undergone numerous changes since Father Ledoux was ordained in 1993, the Diocese of Providence has upheld their commitment to protecting children. The Office of Compliance was created the same year Father Ledoux was ordained, putting the Diocese of Providence at the forefront of protecting children and young people. This office had been fully investigating any and all reports of abuse nearly 10 years before the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops formalized procedures to protect children in 2002.

With the addition of the Diocesan Advisory Board for the Protection of Children and Young People, there is a strong infrastructure in place to protect children and offer a positive environment

for kids to develop their faith. The Advisory Board is comprised of a retired former R.I. State Police officer, a Rhode Island District Court judge and clergy from other faith organizations in Providence. The board reviews diocesan policies to ensure they meet the high standard set in Rhode Island.

Father Ledoux remarked on his experience of how committed local parishes are to protecting children. From background checks to Safe Environment Training, every parish is completely on board with the procedures established by the Office of Compliance, Father Ledoux observed.

“The Diocese of Providence has provided the utmost protection to children ever since I was ordained,” he added.

Father Ledoux describes his commitment to the priesthood as a journey and praised the support of his family and the larger Rhode Island community.

“The churches in Rhode Island offer so much to us because of the fraternal support of other priests in the area,” he said. “That is what makes Rhode Island so great. We are all one big family that supports each other.”

“I certainly made the right decision all those years ago to become a priest rather than a school teacher.”

To learn more about St. Mary Church and the ministries they offer, visit <http://www.saintmarycranston.org>.

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