

## TRANSCRIPT

Rev. Thomas J. Furrer 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration 1/23/2022

Delivered by Rebecca Scruton

TODAY HAS BEEN 9 MONTHS IN THE PLANNING, BELIEVE IT OR NOT.

\*\*\*\*\*

As you may or may not know in the Episcopal Church a priest goes through 2 ordinations. 1) Transitional Deacon 2) Priest. The first is to be a time of “internship” (with a limited role) and the second one 6 months to a year later a fully authorized Priest. The anniversary of Tom’s 35th **Diaconal Ordination** was in June, 2021 and the anniversary of His **Priestly Ordination** was in December, 2021. Hence the planning for this celebration began around April of last year. **Joyce Tomlinson**, assisted by a group of volunteers, graciously agreed to spearhead this celebration. The Celebration was to be in the Parish Hall with festive decorations, food, music and people from here and as well as other places of his ministry were all to be invited.

The original plan was for June...as this time approached, we knew Covid would curtail this activity. So, we decided to postpone the event to the anniversary of his **Priestly Ordination**. However, due to Covid, that celebration also had to be postponed. The conversation turned to “how” could we celebrate in a reasonable time and safely. The decision was made to have **our day of remembrance and thanksgiving for Tom and MJ’s ministry in the sanctuary, and very scaled down.**

Over his years with us, Fr Tom has shared his experience of God's call on his life... at night time in the middle of a football field. His story reminds me of a portion of scripture from the book of Isaiah, chapter 6.

I will read this to you so that we all get a sense of what "God's call" looks like when it is made known in a very definitive way.

## **Isaiah 6:1-8 NLT**

**6** It was in the year King Uzziah died<sup>1a</sup> that I (Isaiah) saw the Lord. He was sitting on a lofty throne, and the train of his robe filled the Temple. <sup>2</sup> Attending him were mighty seraphim, each having six wings. With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. <sup>3</sup> They were calling out to each other,

**"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Heaven's Armies!**

**The whole earth is filled with his glory!"**

**<sup>4</sup> Their voices shook the Temple to its foundations, and the entire building was filled with smoke.**

**<sup>5</sup> Then I said, "It's all over! I am doomed, for I am a sinful man. I have filthy lips, and I live among a people with filthy lips. Yet I have seen the King, the Lord of Heaven's Armies."**

**<sup>6</sup> Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. <sup>7</sup> He touched my lips with it and said, "See, this coal has touched your lips. Now your guilt is removed, and your sins are forgiven."**

**<sup>8</sup> Then I heard the Lord asking, "Whom should I send as a messenger to this people? Who will go for us?"**

**I said, "Here I am. Send me."**

\*\*\*\*\*

**AND this is how Tom responded: "here I am Lord, send me."**

\*\*\*\*\*

**The cost was high, the sacrifices great, the struggles very real. Going to school, working, being married with a growing family... COSTLY**

**However, let's remember MJ... she, too, participated in this journey and carried an enormous portion of the responsibilities.**

**The most important aspect of MJ's call at that time was praying for Tom and 'being' for Tom as well as the family.**

**The time finally came that he graduated from seminary and was ordained to the diaconate and the priesthood.**

**These past thirty-five years have been filled with the work of the HS's leading.**

**Thousands of stories, people, relationships, joys and heart breaks, successes and failures, learning and changing, being formed more and more into the person God has chosen and making them more and more into the image of his Son.**

**\*\*\*\*\***

**Tom and Maryjane, we sincerely wish that others from your previous places of ministry could have joined us.**

**Hopefully our celebration and gratitude for each of you and your presence among us will also be representative of the many from your past that you hold in your heart.**

**Your listening to God's call to come here truly has been a resurrection journey for us. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for coming here, for loving us, praying for us and nurturing us with God's word. Thank you for your encouragement to "go out to Love God, Love our neighbors and Change the world".**

**You have faithfully lived out Paul's exhortation to Timothy:**

**“<sup>11</sup> Teach these things and insist that everyone learn them. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity. <sup>13</sup> ... focus on reading the Scriptures to the church, encouraging the believers, and teaching them.**

**<sup>14</sup> Do not neglect the spiritual gift you received through the prophecy spoken over you when the elders of the church laid their hands on you. <sup>15</sup> Give your complete attention to these matters. Throw yourself into your tasks so that everyone will see your progress. <sup>16</sup> Keep a close watch on how you live and on your teaching. Stay true to what is right for the sake of your own salvation and the salvation of those who hear you.**

**And God says to both of you: “Well done good and faithful servants.”**

**\*\*\*\*\***

**Your people here at Trinity want to thank you for your being with us and for the 35 years of faithfully journeying with God.**

**This gift of \$1900.00+ has been gratefully given by your Trinity friends and companions on this journey.**

**\*\*\*\*\***

**And now Bishop Gordon will close in prayers and a blessing for you and MJ.**