

- In the year 719, St. Boniface left his native England to go to Germany to preach the Gospel.
- A great teacher and orator, as well as a savvy administrator and zealous missionary, St. Boniface is a towering figure in the Church's first millennia.
- It is St. Boniface who is credited with evangelizing the Frankish people and establishing the deep roots of Holy Mother Church in that pagan land.
- What I admire most about St. Boniface is that he was not driven by worldly gain or any hopes for earthly fame, but rather simply by a desire to glorify God and save souls.
- St. Boniface was a man who fulfilled the priestly promise to, "be united more closely every day to Christ the High Priest, Who offered Himself for us to the Father as a pure sacrifice, and with Him to consecrate [oneself] to God for the salvation of all."
- One of the most notable events in St. Boniface's life was when, in the presence of many whom he was trying to convert, he chopped down a tree dedicated to their pagan god, Thor.
- Those pagans thought for sure that Thor, the god of thunder, would strike down Boniface for such an act, and yet from just a few hearty blows with an axe, that tree symbolizing the falseness of their beliefs came tumbling down, and many converted.
- It's amazing what our Lord can do with a little courage and faith!
- In 754, while on yet another missionary excursion, St. Boniface and several attendants were ambushed by a group of pagans armed with swords and spears.
- While his attendants would have fought the pagans, St. Boniface said to them: "My children, cease your resistance; the long-expected day is come at last. Scripture forbids us to resist evil. Let us put our hope in God: He will save our souls."
- Barely had he uttered these words when St. Boniface was killed by a pagan's sword. Like so many great martyrs that had gone before him, Boniface didn't hesitate to lay down his life for the sake of our Catholic Faith, and for the honor and glory of our God.
- St. Boniface was a man who so willingly and joyfully conformed his life to the mystery of the Lord's cross – which I can assure you is no mean feat.
- And yet that is precisely what the priesthood demands: the daily dying to self with Christ, so that the life of faith may be given to others. That is our duty. And that is our privilege.
- Our model for how to do this is not only the saints like Boniface who did it heroically well, but Jesus Christ Himself, in Whose priesthood we share.
- On Friday we will celebrate the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, a glorious feast day in which we turn our loving attention upon Christ's heart that was so cruelly torn open by the soldier's lance as He hung dead upon the cross.
- In that moment, as blood and water flowed out of our Lord's wounded side, the sacramental life of the Church was inaugurated. Thus, we see in the Sacred Heart of Jesus the font of God's mercy and love.
- As priests we are called to imitate our Lord in this sacrificial act, generously offering ourselves for the sake of those entrusted to us, without heed for what it costs us personally.
- As priests we are called to stand at the foot of the Cross, generously dispensing the blood and water flowing from the font of God's mercy and love, which is the life of souls.
- Ours is a life of speaking the truth with love, of going the extra mile for others without complaint, of shining the light of Christ into the darkness of our world – and all so that God may be glorified, and souls may be saved.

- Priests exercise a paternity that is a true fatherhood in every way: we generate new life through the Sacrament of Baptism; we educate, guide, and protect through our preaching and teaching; and we provide for our children by our prayers, through our offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and through the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.
- And I am ever grateful to our Lord for calling me to this beautiful and sublime vocation.
- I'm also particularly grateful to our Lord's Immaculate Mother, who has so faithfully fulfilled a promise she made to me over 30 years ago that she would always keep her mantle of protection around me.
- I am grateful to the saints in Heaven, who inspire me, intercede for me, form me, and look after me. I am very grateful to my family, especially my parents, who have loved me and supported me so well.
- While he's been gone for almost 9 years, I have every confidence that my father is praying and interceding for me. And I am blessed to have my mother, Sharon, and her new husband, Will, with us here tonight.
- I am grateful to my brother priests for their good example and fraternal affection.
- And I am grateful to all of you. It's a humbling thing to see so many of you here. While the past 20 years haven't always been easy or fun, they have been blessed and joyful because of the wonderful people around me.
- Lastly, I ask you tonight to pray that all priests may be endowed with the gifts of courage and faith, as well as with a heart burning with charity – just like St. Boniface.
- While the priesthood is a most sublime and joyful vocation, it is also one fraught with pitfalls of all kinds. And I mean it sincerely when I tell you that we priests need your prayers. Your prayers and sacrifices are what sustain us and keep us on the right path.
- And I am so very grateful for the generosity that you've shown me in my priesthood. I am a priest who has been well cared for by the people of God, and I'm ever so grateful.
- Thank you for your prayers, your love, your generosity, and your affection. It's really quite easy to love you all in return.
- May our Lord bless all of you for the way you've blessed me!
- St. Boniface, pray for us!