

A little over a year ago I headed to Hobby Lobby one evening. I had gotten some glass pumpkins and fake leaves for some Fall decorations for the rectory, but the mantles needed something – vases with bouquets with some fall colors.

I would love to see the security camera footage of me that evening. Up and down the three aisles of fake flowers, with multiple side trips to the two rows in a nearby section, and occasional stops at end caps. Back and forth I went, up and down and back again. While I didn't look at a clock, I had to have been there for a good 90 minutes trying to make up my mind of flower and color choices. And at that point I just had raw materials – I still had to put the four bouquets together!

Flower ministry is not a ministry that I am called to. It doesn't help that I get fake flowers precisely because I am allergic to the real ones which are all we use at church. I have been known to rearrange pots, or have ideas on general arrangements, but I am not the one to put the bouquets together in the first place. Now, after almost two and a half hours, I think my arrangements came out pretty okay, but it's not my calling or gift.

Thankfully, there are others who do have this gift, and help bring beauty to our churches as we honor the Lord and celebrate special feasts.

We all have gifts. It's just a question of what we do with them. Do we use them for ourselves? Or do we also share them with the Lord, and one another, as we build up his kingdom as coworkers in his vineyard? The Church is better able to carry out her mission when each of us shares the gifts of God we have received. There is a richness, a depth, a breadth, as each of us brings something unique. In the same way, when some choose not to share their gifts, the life of the Church is not as rich, not as deep, not as wide, and her ability to carry out her mission is lessened.

Thank you to those who have already filled out their pledge cards, for following Christ faithfully and helping others do the same. To those who haven't, ask the Lord Jesus where he is calling you to give of yourself. Near the end of his life, Jesus said, "I did not come to be served, but to serve and give my life as a ransom for many." (Mt 20:28) May we live as he lived, and serve as he served.

In Christ,

Fr. Matthew Oakland