

In seminary, we change ministry assignments every year to gain wider experience of parish life. While at St. Patrick Seminary in Menlo Park, California, I helped with a youth group at Our Lady of the Angels, OCIA at St. Justin the Martyr, hospital chaplaincy at Good Samaritan, and I served as a deacon on weekends at St. Christopher, helping with baptisms, preaching, and other duties as assigned. I spent a summer at Our Lady of Fatima in Seattle and another at St. Rose of Lima in Longview, sharing in summer life and programming at the parishes, making homebound visits with the pastors, accompanying the middle schoolers on a trip to the Agape service program in Skagit county with migrant workers, working on Spanish, visiting local parishes for daily Mass to get to know the archdiocese better, etc. I spent my internship year at St. Jude just up the road, involved in little bits of everything – from the various council meetings to the gamut of liturgical ministries, assisting with the parochial vicar's health and care needs to aiding the pastor with his nativity displays. In the five years leading up to my priestly ordination, I was engaged in just about every ministry in some way, shape or form. Some were easier and a more natural fit. Others were definitely not.

And that's okay. In fact, it's not surprising. There is overlap in every ministry – the centrality of Jesus Christ in everything we do. But there are also wide differences, requiring different gifts. And none of us have them all. And even if we did have all the gifts, or even many of them – I don't know that any of our parish members have the ability to bilocate. So that really gifted person can only be in one place at any given time, working with one ministry. So, if others are to happen, and thrive, that means more people sharing their gifts.

I don't know anyone who doesn't want more for our communities. It's just a question of whether we are willing to give of our time, talents and treasure to make that happen. During the next few weeks, we will be talking about sharing our time and talents in our parish and parish family. In November, we will reflect on the stewardship of our treasure.

In the 2025-26 Annual Reports for our individual parishes, published this weekend and emailed out and located on our parish Partners page at mqp.org/partners, we see some of the story of last year. What will this year's story be? And what role/s will you play? What gifts will you share that God has given you?