

HOMILY 5TH SUN LENT
March 22, 2026

Many people have asked me how I made the transition from attorney to priest, so I decided to give you the Reader's Digest version. I worked for a number of years at a State Agency with disabled people and I liked it, but I could not see myself doing that for the rest of my life. I decided to keep my job and go to law school and see how that went. I graduated in the top 10% of my class and took several weeks off work to study for the bar exam. I was obsessed. I was studying all day and only sleeping a couple of hours at night. It was not good. The Sunday before I was to take the exam, I went to Mass. There was a priest there that I was really impressed with. I thought, this is a guy who is doing something very important. I had a sense of peace and felt just take the exam and if you do not pass it, it will not be the end of the world. I went home, put away all of my books, took the exam several days later and passed. So I thought, this is a sign, this is what I am supposed to do and started applying for jobs. I applied at many small law firms to do things that I was really interested in and no one hired me. I sent out one résumé to a large law firm and got a job offer right away. I thought this is a sign, not what I thought I wanted, but maybe this is what I am supposed to do. I could make a lot of money there and it would be good experience. From the first day, I felt like a fish out of water. I thought I will give it 6 months and if I feel the same, I will quit. The partner that I worked with kept telling me you just have to enjoy the game. Just enjoy the game. After 6 months, I quit. I learned a lot. I learned that I did not enjoy the game. By doing medical malpractice defense for the hospital interest, I was just working with other attorneys. I did not feel like I was helping anyone, and I learned that was very important to me. I also learned that I would never take another job for the money. So here I was with no job and a mortgage. I decided I would go back to my state job. When I left, they told me that if I wanted to come back they would always

have a job for me. When I contacted my employer, he said we would love to have you back, although there is a hiring freeze on now but we will take you back as soon as it is lifted. I got more involved in Church because I had all of this time on my hands. As the months went on and the hiring freeze was not lifted, I thought this is a sign. I cannot go back. I started sending out resumes again. There was a book I used when I was counseling called *What Color Is Your Parachute* that I used to help people with vocational direction. I worked my way through the book and my number one career was Catholic Priest. I thought, you have got to be kidding, but maybe this is a sign. I should at least investigate it. I met with the vocation director and he signed me up to do a discernment weekend at the seminary, where you stay at the seminary for a weekend to find out what that was like. I felt very comfortable there, but during the weekend, I got a job offer doing general practice work with regular people clients. This was the job I thought I wanted. I thought, maybe this is a sign. I took the job and worked in it for a couple of years and was really successful. I felt defeated after my first attorney job, but now I could let that go. I could leave that job and go become a priest, which is what I had discerned I was called to become. Definitely not a straight line from attorney to priest but I think these were all things I needed to experience.

In the Gospel reading, we hear how our faith in God can develop over the years. Jesus heard that Lazarus died; he waits two days, and then tells his disciples he wants to go back to Judea. Their first response is, are you kidding? They tried to stone you the last time you were there and you want to go back? Jesus said he is going to awaken Lazarus. They do not understand what he is talking about, but they have learned to trust Jesus. Thomas says “we might die with him, but let’s go. When they get to Judea they encounter Martha and Mary. They have limited trust and faith in Jesus. They kind of put him into a box. They believe that Jesus is the Christ, but they also believe

that Jesus could have cured Lazarus if he had come before he died, but now it is too late. They even objected when Jesus wanted them to open the tomb. But Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead as a clear sign of who he is and what he can do. And I think it was the final sign that eventually got him killed.

I have learned over the years to trust God, to go with what life brings. I frequently do not understand where things are headed, but like Thomas I can just go with it. Sometimes He leads me to a challenging situation, and sometimes it is a learning experience. Sometimes He leads me to a great place as He did when He led me to the priesthood. I have learned not to box God in like Martha and Mary. They believed that Jesus could cure Lazarus because he had healed many people in the past, but raise Lazarus from the dead? I still do not know what God has in store for me in the future, but I am going to trust him and go with it.