

# The Hands of Holy Orders

by Larry and Mary Sue Eck and Bob and Rita Boeke

Look at the palms of your hands and remember back to that day when your bishop anointed them and sent you forth to love and serve us.

Remember the plans you had that day for these hands, to gather and minister to your people?

Think back to the babies these hands have baptized and think of the children these hands have prepared for First Communion and Confirmation. Think of the hundreds of homilies these hands have written; carefully chosen words that transform lives.

Think of the countless times these hands have been held up in blessing and forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Now think of your last Mass, and so many others, when you took plain bread and wine into these hands, and changed them into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Think of the hands, our hands, which you place His Precious Body and the cup of His Precious Blood.

Think of the retreats, the missions, the days and nights of renewal that these hands have prepared.

Think of the people these hands have gathered and touched and sent forth from these experiences, with a new understanding and love for each other and for our Catholic Church.

Think of the times these hands have reached out and grasped ours in a prayer circle of love.

Think of the hands, young and nervous, which your hands have joined in the Sacrament of Matrimony.

Think of the sick in mind and body who have come to you seeking help and left with hope alive in their hearts again.

Think of the dying bodies these hands have anointed into Paradise.

Today we anoint your hands anew with our love; with the love of your entire Catholic family.

If ever, in the days ahead, you feel lonely and discouraged, please remember these words. Please hold up your hands and look at them, and remember how they fed us the Bread of Life, how they brought hope back into our lives, how they comforted us, healed us, and welcomed us home to our church again.

We wish we could take you by the hand and stand at the busiest intersection in town and shout to the world, "Look everyone - this is our beloved priest, in whom we are well pleased."

These hands of yours are the hands of the Sacrament of Holy Orders. We revere them and we cannot live our lives without them...without YOU. Thank you for faithfully loving and serving us. We are so proud that you are OUR beloved priest.