



OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP
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Renewing the Priestly Heart Foreword

Brothers:

It has been my honor to serve our Lord as a priest for most of my life, and more recently as a bishop and archbishop. God has blessed me with years of fulfilling assignments in service to our beloved Church. I pray that every priest can say the same.

We are priests. This is our call. This is our life.

Our mission is to minister to a broken world and to bring the person, message, invitation, and salvation of Jesus Christ to all people. People are attracted to Christ and the Church when they observe us living our vocations joyfully and zealously. Joyful living is a powerful witness. Conversely, effectiveness in living out our mission can, at times, be impeded by our occasional lack of zeal or even by our apathy. This can develop when we feel overburdened, drained, and alone.

If we are to refresh our souls and feed our zeal, we priests need to take time to be ministered to ourselves. Jesus told us where two or three gather in his name he is there among us. I believe that small communities of priests, who gather regularly to pray, discuss faith and support one another in vocation and holiness will experience the presence of Christ and receive insights from the Holy Spirit to better serve God's people. In these groups, we can revitalize and sustain our fraternity, which both reflects and energizes the communal life Jesus desires for the whole Church. As we pray and reflect together, we can also constantly renew our vision of our mission to lead God's people in living the gospel by building a more just world in the work and relationships of our everyday lives.

One of the assignments that I was most fond of was my time as rector of the North American College in Rome. That chapter in my vocation allowed me to participate in the formation of many seminarians. I am pleased that many insights on priestly life from my years as rector have been integrated into *Renewing the Priestly Heart* for discussion and reflection by groups of priests today. I thank RENEW International for its innovative work in creating this helpful resource for priests. It is my prayer that these reflections will help those who are seeking to refresh their souls and renew their zeal.

To my brother priests, I thank you for all you do in service to the Lord and our beloved Church. I encourage your personal growth as you join your fellow priests as participants in *Renewing the Priestly Heart*.

God bless you.

Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan
September 6, 2011