



James Deshotels, SJ
25 Years in the Priesthood

St. Peter says we are “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people” to announce the praises of God who called us into his wonderful light. Once we were “no people” but now we are “God’s people” ... we have received mercy. (1 Peter 2: 9-10)



So ‘my’ priesthood is secondary to yours, at the service of yours. We are the people who’ve received mercy. We announce the Good News, forgive sins, offer love to one another and those in need; we are signs of God’s love in an unloving world.

We ordained priests celebrate the Eucharist, forgive sins, baptize, witness marriages, anoint the sick, and sometimes confirm. We serve as we can.

Priesthood is *who we are*, more than *what we do*. What we do is essential. *How we do it* is also essential. No matter what we say or do, people remember *how we make them feel*. We see this in Jesus’ ministry as he teaches and heals the sick, or talks to the woman at the well in John 4.

I grew up with the ideal of the Jesuit priest – professional – in my case, nursing. As a priest and a nurse, the *way* I’ve done things has sometimes been much more important than what I was doing – dressing a wound, moving a chair, doing whatever is necessary for the person I am serving.

It involves being the Face of Christ in traumatic situations. I learned in the New Orleans Superdome during Hurricane Katrina – no one had time for Mass, but everybody wanted Communion – both Sacramental and human. And it happened.

