

Coming Home...the Experience of Being Ordained

By Rev. Robert Meagher

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I recently had lunch with a dear friend. During our time together I shared my recent experience of being ordained into the Order of Melchizedek, a non-denominational, interfaith priesthood¹. After telling my story, my friend said “Rob, you have to write about it. Others may enjoy hearing your story as much as I did”. So it is with that intention that I share the experience and hope it brings you the peace and joy it did me.

Being ordained into a non-denominational, interfaith priesthood—as I imagine it is being ordained into any priesthood—is a precious experience. It is a life-changing. Even with all my years of preparation and training, there was nothing that could prepare me for the experience: no amount of studying; no amount of prayer or meditation; no library of literature; no amount of speaking to others about their similar experience. It is only by actually experiencing the event—like with any spiritual experience—that you know what it is to touch the Divine and be one with Spirit.

Waking and Preparations

The day started with my usual expression of gratitude, a waking prayer to welcome the day. This was immediately followed with my daily spiritual lesson—a 10-minute meditation on the day’s topic of reflection. I proceeded with some yoga exercises, mostly stretching, as the sun rose over the park outside my window. It was truly a glorious morning.

After showering and shaving, I enjoyed my traditional breakfast of homemade granola, fresh fruit, raisins, dates, almonds and yogurt. The ordinations were to start at 1pm, so I decided to eat a modest amount at breakfast. I knew I would be eating another small meal shortly before departing for the ordination and I wanted to feel hungry for that meal.

Following breakfast, I decided to enjoy another, more lengthy meditation. A chiming of the Tingshaw—Tibetan prayer bells—always began my longer meditation sessions. After reading some sacred passages, I quietly chanted a personalized mantra using a mala or prayer beads (the spiritual equivalent of the Christian Rosary). I then sat quietly and focused on establishing a peaceful state of mind. It is this peaceful state of mind I wanted to be with me throughout the rest of the day, especially today.

I enjoyed a light salad for lunch, got dressed, and headed out the door...

¹ For more information about the Order of Melchizedek, read Rev. Dan Chesbro’s book [The Order of Melchizedek: Love, Willing Service, and Fulfillment](#).

Departure

As I shut the door behind me, I stared down the long hallway toward the front door of my building. The sun light shining through a window at the end of the hallway seemed more luminous than usual. I smiled and ambled along my way.

In the weeks leading up to the ordination I had been feeling light on my feet. Not a feeling of walking on clouds, but a sort-of spring in my step, although that does not accurately describe it either. I could remember having this feeling at times in the past, but the preceding weeks found me experiencing this light-footedness most days. It was a comforting feeling, one that seemed to have purpose and meaning. Needless to say, I was most looking forward my walk to the ordination site. The distance seemed irrelevant compared to the journey I had already traveled.

On my way to the ordination, I found myself very attune to the happenings around me, especially the people. Everyone seemed happy somehow. In retrospect, I think I was extending the deep inner peace I had established for myself earlier and in the days, weeks, months and years leading up to this day. People were smiling, enjoying life and those people around them. It was a beautiful reality.

The faces of the people I passed along the way greeted me with warm smiles. Their eyes twinkled and we shared a knowing moment. I watched two Chinese women greet each other with gentle hugs as I walked through a park that was used by the local Chinese community for their daily tai chi and qigong practices. The city was afoot with the usual bustle but it all seemed more joyful on this day.

I began to near my destination, in more ways than one...

Arrival

I arrived early so I sat on a bench outside the building where the ordinations were to take place. It was a cool fall day but the sun kept me warm. Even though I live in one of the coldest cities on the planet (so the climatological experts say), I enjoy the outdoors but only if I am dressed warmly.

After about 15 minutes, I noticed other people begin to arrive so I made my way inside. After greeting those who had already gathered, I signed in and made my way to the room where the ordinations were to take place. I remember my last thought before entering the room was "Pass no judgment; remain open-minded; and enjoy the experience".

The room was small, modest, understated and sparsely decorated. I liked it; it seemed rather appropriate on this day. Other than the rows of chairs for people to sit in, there was a single table at the front of the room with a beautiful bouquet of flowers on it.

Those persons being ordained were asked to sit up front in the designated chairs. I happily took my seat and settled in for the afternoon. I remember looking around the room as the other priests-to-be and guests filed in. I was overcome with a feeling of equality and oneness among everyone.

I also began to ponder and appreciate the responsibilities associated with what was to come...

Coming Home

The afternoon began rather unceremoniously with the ordaining priests welcoming everyone and initiating a dialogue about the Order. As this preliminary component of the proceedings blossomed, I not only became aware of the spirit building in the room but I also became aware of the responsibility and commitment associated with being ordained into this Order of priesthood. While I had thought about this responsibility and commitment previously, sitting there, listening to the ordaining priest share as he did brought the experience to life.

There were almost 20 priests being ordained on this day. Those to be ordained were called up front in groups of five. As one person was being ordained, the others would sit off to the side awaiting their turn. I was the second last person to be ordained, so I had the joy of experiencing many other priests being ordained before me.

As the ordinations started, I chose this time as an opportunity to be still and welcome the energy that was growing in the room. I purposely chose to not watch the other priests being ordained. It was a respectful gesture on my part; as I felt the experience of ordination was between the ordainer and ordainee. Instead, I listened and felt the experience.

As the other priests were being ordained, I became emotional. The predominant energy that was present in the room was love. It was everywhere! It existed in every person, every object, every moment. I was overcome with the wonderful, joyous feeling of coming home to something that I had never really left, but that for a long time I had forgotten.

At its peak, the energy in the room emitted audible tones that sounded like whispers. This energy swirled around the room, through everyone. It was a purifying energy, a loving energy, an energy that cradles your heart and soul and envelops you in a warm, welcoming and nurturing hug.

I was then called up to the front of the room with the last group of people to be ordained. I do not remember walking up front, I only remember sitting down in the chair that was off to the side. I remained peaceful as those before me were ordained.

When the woman immediately before me was being ordained, knowing that I would be next, my heart began to beat faster. The process of ordination takes only a few minutes. But in these few minutes preceding my ordination, my heart was pounding so hard, I was sure others could hear it. The pounding of my heart then moved throughout my chest until my entire chest felt as if it was pulsating. It was not a comfortable feeling. It felt constricting. There was a brief moment when I became fearful and had a fleeting thought of "I cannot go through with this". I let myself feel the feelings but did not react to them. As they had come, I watched them pass by as I was called to the front of the room to be ordained.

I was asked to sit in a chair designated for the ordination ceremony and I was handed a scepter-like staff. At this moment I was calm. I closed my eyes and remembered saying to myself "Relax, enjoy the experience". The ordaining priest proceeded with the ceremony. First, there were some prayers, then anointment with oils and water. This was followed by more prayers and a brief chanting by the ordaining priest.

As these few precious minutes passed, my body was feeling an energy building. I knew from my previous spiritual experiences that to focus on the sensation, experience, or energy would make it go away. So I acknowledged the feeling, stayed calm, and let it pass.

The feeling of energy surging through my body remained constant, however, and continued to build. It was a beautiful, peaceful feeling. I remember for a moment not feeling like I was sitting in the chair; but nor was I standing. Then, the ordaining priest issued the words "I declare you a priest in the Order of Melchizedek". This was a precious, life-changing moment.

As soon as the ordaining priest issued those words, an intense energy started to rapidly build in my chest. It started in the centre of my chest and expanded outwards toward my shoulders and arms, as well as out toward the front of my body. The energy just kept growing. At a moment I felt as though my chest cavity was going to burst open. It was not a painful experience; it was extraordinary. Again, I acknowledged the feeling and let it go.

The energy remained and now started moving past my shoulder to my arms. This energy began to move down my arms, over my biceps, elbows, forearms, wrists and hands. I can only describe the sensation this way: it felt like that sensation you get when you stand up and realize your leg has fallen asleep. As you shake and gently move your leg, there is an unpleasant tingling sensation that moves throughout your leg. In this case, however, unlike waking a leg that has fallen asleep, this sensation was not unpleasant.

As the energy moved toward the end of my fingers, there was a pressure build up in my fingertips. At its apex, I can remember feeling like this energy was going to explode out the ends of my fingers. Amazingly, though, the sensation was not painful or uncomfortable. It was magnificent.

At this moment I was asked to step forward and was embraced by the ordaining minister as he echoed the words "God bless you". In that moment, I knew what it was to be touched by the Divine and to become one with Spirit.

I had come home...