



I'd like to share with you a prayer I wrote, a window into what I think every seminarian carries in his heart. So if you'd like to pray for all of us and pray with us on this journey towards the priesthood, switch things around and ask God to give us the graces asked for in this prayer.

Give me, Lord, your hands—the hands of a priest:

- the hands of God the Father who took clay and with it formed your image and likeness; teach me to form your image in souls
- Noah's hands that built an ark, a refuge for your people
- the hands of Abraham, open and willing to give whatever you ask, even that dearest to my heart
- the hands of Melchizedek that offered bread and wine
- the hands of Moses, raised in intercession for your people and mighty enough to plow a path through the sea; I have not strength enough to keep my hands lifted in saving prayer unless you sustain them
- the hands of Aaron, consecrated to raise an acceptable sacrifice
- the hands of David as he played out his heart for you on the lyre
- the hands of Joshua that conquered the promised land
- the hands of Nehemiah: one building the wall and one vigilant on the hilt of the sword
- the hands of Mary, first in the world to receive you
- Simeon's hands, that you allowed to draw back the veil so he could contemplate a child's Divine Face
- your hands that up took clay and cured the blind man
- your hands that tenderly hold a child's as you whisper, "Little girl, arise"
- the Father's hands as, without words, he embraces his prodigal son and doesn't let go
- your hands that took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and through the breaking, gave the gift of yourself
- Simon's hands as they grasp your cross and with you struggle up Calvary
- your victim hands that were pierced through in my place

- your hands that spread a blessing over the world as you ascended into heaven

Lord, soon, through your grace, my hands will be anointed with sacred oils and I will receive the sacrament of your priesthood. My hands are weak, and all they can do is cling to you and beg for mercy.

The hands of the priest are called to make God present on earth. Give me hands that bless, guard, and defend; hands that take up the plow and never turn aside; hands that give your sacraments in your Name and with your Heart. Strengthen me. Work through me in spite of me and may my priesthood be for those you have given me a fountain of pure grace.

Raise your hand and bless me, Father. And through me, bless the world. Amen.