

En Theos

Enthusiasm for the Faith

Q *To solve the shortage of priests in this country, why can't we bring in priests from other countries where they have enough?*

A This is a recycled story that makes me wonder where exactly is this country where there are so many priests? The place does not exist, but it raises some interesting issues, including people's attitudes towards priests. Firstly, diocesan priests are ordained for a diocese to serve the needs of their own people. Much of their ministry is based on a knowledge of cultural norms, customs and values. They are called from their local communities to serve local needs. They are not all foreign missionaries. Secondly, Americans often assume wrongly that people of other nations are anxious to come to the US. Priests, like any of us, want to be close to family and friends and do not necessarily see us as having the land of wonder and opportunity. Thirdly, the priesthood is changing and people need to adapt. In the short term, things will be difficult. There may not always be a Mass in your parish every day or even every week. In the long run, the Holy Spirit will have to show us what we are to do. Fourth, ministry is everyone's responsibility, so get involved! Finally, show your appreciation and concern for the priests we do have. They have a tough job and it is not getting any easier.

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