

[Father Charles Landry](#)

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Behind the Collar



nowhere I saw him and then I felt him. He body-checked me into the boards and I felt instant pain. I slid down the boards like you see the characters in the cartoons and plopped down onto the ice. I then crawled along the boards until I got to the door of the rink. I got out, unlaced my skates and left the rink never to return. The block of granite that slammed me into the boards is a good friend, Archbishop Joseph Tobin of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

Q Your sport of today is golf. Are you a good player?

A I enjoy playing, however I am one of the worst. To justify my being so bad, I tell those that I play with that it is said that a priest who is a bad golfer is so because he is a good pastor who spends more time in his parish than on the links. I was recently asked what's the closest I ever came to having a hole-in-one. Without catching a breath, I responded, "In my dreams." I do remember a shot I made on a par-three hole. My ball landed about 10 feet from the cup. I was so excited and nervous that I ended up with a double bogie – two shots over par.

Q You have been active in prison ministry for many years. What have the prisoners you have served taught you?

A For the last 12 years, along with being a pastor of two wonderful parishes, I have been involved in prison ministry. I was part-time Catholic chaplain for seven years at Louisiana State Penitentiary. I am presently involved with Hunt Prison and Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women here in St. Gabriel. What I have learned from my incarcerated sisters and brothers is: There but for the grace of God go I. No one of us is perfect and unfortunately some of us have to pay a more costly price for our imperfections.

Q You are a "Plan B" person. Do you have an example of when Plan B turned out more than you could ever have hoped for?

A Years ago a good friend gave me a sign which reads, "Life is all about how you handle Plan B." The message that my friend was offering me through the gift of the sign is that in life we do not always get what we would wish and often what we get is so much better than what we wished for in the beginning. In my life numerous times that has been proven true. My friend gave me this sign because he could see that I was disappointed that I did not receive what I was hoping to receive. Well after I got over my disappointment and accepted what God offered me, I can honestly say that I could not have been any happier. I was hoping for a particular pastoral assignment that I did not receive, but the one I received has been a great blessing. Life is all about how you handle "Plan B."

Q St. Francis is one of your favorite saints. What do you admire most about him?

A I favor him for his great love of God as is expressed in his openness to God's plan, his humility, his love of the poor and his love of nature. My favorite quote of his is, "Preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and if necessary, use words." I am challenged by Francis' words, and I pray that the manner in which I live my life preaches Jesus and his Gospel.

Q You love to travel. What would be a dream trip for you?

A The cruise of the Alaskan straight which would include the Denali train ride, and spend time in Nova Scotia experiencing my Acadian roots.

...with FATHER CHARLES R. LANDRY, pastor of St. Gabriel Church, St. Gabriel

Q You played ice hockey in high school and seminary. Did it get rough on the ice?

A In my seminary days, which were spent in the states of Minnesota (high school) and Wisconsin (college) one of our school sports was ice hockey. I was a pretty good roller skater and I had no problem learning to ice skate. I became pretty good at ice skating and that led to my liking to play hockey. I enjoyed hockey because of the skating, the team work and the competition, especially playing against our northern buddies. For a southern boy, along with a few other southern boys, we held our own against the northern boys. That is until the day I played against a skater from Michigan. He was built like a piece of granite and was just as solid. Well I stole the puck from the opposing team and I had a break-away. There was no one between me and the goalie. Skating near the boards, I thought I had a clear path to the opposing goalie and then from out of