

Welcome to the ordination of X, Y, and Z to the priesthood. Your presence and prayer at their ordination is a great gift to them. (Please remember to turn off your pagers and cell telephones and do not take photographs or movies — the rite will be recorded by the official photographers.)

Your prayer is not only a gift—in some way it is your holy duty to pray for them not just today but for the rest of your life. As the Rite of Ordination tells us in the Introduction [§103]: “It is the duty of all the faithful of the diocese to assist the candidates for the priesthood by their prayers.”

Every time you hear Bishop B say, “Let us pray” during this Ordination Mass, he is not just being polite — he is inviting you to exercise the priesthood given you in your baptism and confirmation by praying for X, Y, and Z and for your intentions and for the intentions of the whole world. In some way it is not an exaggeration to say that this ordination will not be able to go forward if you do not pray every time you are invited to pray.

The most solemn praying you will do today is during the Litany of the Saints. At that time we will all be joined by the angels and saints, the ones whose names we sing and all of heaven, in our prayer for X, Y, and Z.

During the litany X, Y, and Z will prostrate themselves on the floor of the sanctuary, the posture of the most solemn praying that any Christian can do. As the German Benedictine, Fr. Anselm Grün, tells us: “This ancient custom symbolizes the priest’s offering of himself to God [and to the Church] just as a husband offers himself to his wife” (The Seven Sacraments, “Ordination—Prostration”).

For what are we all praying today? For what shall you pray? For the gifts of the Holy Spirit to descend in a new way on X, Y, and Z. You will hear Bishop B invoke the Holy Spirit in a very special manner during the Prayer of Ordination. This invocation is called an epiclesis, the calling on God the Father in the name of his Son Jesus to send his Spirit from heaven upon X, Y, and Z.

(This epiclesis is similar to the two epicleses in every Mass, when the bishop or priest extends his hands over the bread and the wine and asks God the Father in the name of his Son Jesus to send his Spirit to make them the Body and Blood of Christ and when, after the consecration, the bishop or priest asks God the Father in the name of his Son Jesus to send his Spirit to make us and keep us one with each other and with God.)

In the epiclesis of the prayer of ordination Bishop B will say:

**Grant, we pray, Almighty Father,
to these your servants the dignity of the priesthood;
renew deep within them
the Spirit of holiness;
may they henceforth possess this office**

**which comes from you, O God,
and is next in rank to the office of Bishop;
and by the example of their manner of life,
may they instill right conduct.**

Bishop B comes among us today wearing the signs of his ministry among us: the ring of his commitment to us, his shepherd’s staff, his miter (the signs of his knowledge of the Old and New Testaments), his zucchetto (the reddish-rose skullcap that covers the place where chrism was poured out on him at his ordination as bishop), and — underneath his chasuble — a deacon’s dalmatic, the sign that our bishop has received the fullness of the Sacrament of Orders and thus is able to “pass the orders” down.

<p>The Liturgy of the Word</p>	<p>The Preparatory Rites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Election of the Candidate • Homily • Promises of the Elect • Litany of Supplication 	<p>The Heart of the Rite: the Laying on of Hands and Prayer of Ordination</p>	<p>The Explanatory Rites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vesting of the New Priest • Anointing of Hands • Presentation of the Prepared Chalice and Paten • Fraternal Peace among the Order of Priests 	<p>The Liturgy of the Eucharist</p>
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Today’s Ordination Mass is like every Mass in that there is a Liturgy of the Word and a Liturgy of the Eucharist. The Rite of Ordination is inserted between these two, right after the proclamation of the gospel.

In every Mass the Word proclaimed is like an oven: The readings chosen are heated by the Holy Spirit; and the unleavened bread, the sign of human work and human suffering, becomes the Body of Christ. In every Mass the Word proclaimed is also like wine cask: The readings chosen are fermented by the Holy Spirit; and wine, the sign of human work and human joy, becomes the Blood of Christ.

At an ordination the readings chosen are the oven and the cask in which our brothers are also ‘baked and fermented’ and transformed into a sacrament of Christ the Priest.

At the heart of the Rite of Ordination is the Laying on of Hands and Prayer of Ordination. The Laying on of Hands is the most ancient gesture in this Rite and goes back to the Acts of the Apostles.

To get us ready for the rite, there are preparatory rites; and to reveal to us the meaning of what has taken place, there are explanatory rites.

The preparatory rites are these: the Election of X, Y, and Z by Us and by the Bishop, the Bishop's Homily, the Ordination Promises, and the Litany of Supplication. Taken together with the Liturgy of the Word, these rites are meant to revive in all of us — especially X, Y, and Z — our faith and our prayer so that God, seeing our faith and hearing our prayer, will respond by sending the Holy Spirit in a new way upon X, Y, and Z.

The explanatory rites show us by outward signs what has just happened to Fathers X, Y, and Z and what they have become for us. They are vested in the stole and the chasuble of the priest, the bishop anoints the palms of their hands with sacred chrism, a procession of lay people will bring the prepared chalice and paten to the bishop who will place them into their hands, and Fathers X, Y, and Z are welcomed into the ranks of the order of priests by the bishop and their fellow priests.

The sacred chrism used at today's Mass was consecrated last March Twenty-first by the cardinal, bishops and all the priests of our archdiocese when they were surrounded by representatives of all the people of our archdiocese. Everyone baptized, confirmed, and ordained this whole year was prayed for when the pure olive oil was mixed with magnificent fragrances. The cardinal breathed the Holy Spirit into the chrism as Jesus breathed the Spirit upon the Apostles on the evening of the first Easter. Take time to smell the fragrance of the chrism on the hands of Fathers X, Y, and Z as you receive their blessing after Mass. It is a holy custom to kiss the Spirit entrusted to our new priests by kissing their hands.

When Bishop B places the chalice and paten into the hands of Fathers X, Y, and Z, he says a prayer that sums up the spirituality of the priest: 'Receive the oblation of the holy people, to be offered to God. Understand what you do, imitate what you celebrate, and conform your life to the mystery of the Lord's cross.' The bishop commands each new priest to not just to do what he is doing but to understand what he is doing and to learn how to be a priest from the touches, tastes, smells, sights, and sounds of the sacraments.

During the kiss of peace among the ministerial priests, the schola sings the ancient responsory, the 'Iam non dicam,' from the night office of Pentecost. Its text is a pastiche of well-prayed-over sentences from Jesus' prayer for us at the Last Supper and on the evening of the First Easter (John 14:26; 15:14, 15; 20:22).

**Iam non dicam vos servos, sed amicos meos,
quia omnia congnoovistis quae operatus sum in medio vestris [alleluia].
Accipite Spiritum Sanctum in vobis Paraclitum.
Ille est Pater mittet vobis [alleluia].
Vos amici mei estis, si feceritis quae ego praecipio vobis.
Accipite Spiritum Sanctum in vobis Paraclitum.
Ille est Pater mittet vobis [alleluia].**

It is translated thus:

**No longer do I call you servants, but my friends,
because you know all that I have done among you [alleluia].
Receive the Holy Spirit as an Advocate among you:
He is the Spirit whom the Father will send you [alleluia].
You are my friends if you do what I command you.
Receive the Holy Spirit as an Advocate among you.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
He is the Spirit whom the Father will send you [alleluia].**

The Introduction to the Rite of Ordination of Priests explains:

‘By sacred Ordination a sacrament is conferred on priests through which “by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, they are signed with a special character and are so configured to Christ the Priest that they have the power to act in the person of Christ the Head.” Priests, therefore, take part in the Bishop’s priesthood and mission. As virtuous co-workers with the episcopal Order, called to serve the people of God, they constitute one presbyterate in union with their Bishop, while being charged with different duties.’
[§101]

As Bishop B may assign Fathers X, Y, and Z:

- They will announce the divine word to all.
- They will exercise his priesthood above all in the Eucharistic assembly.
- For the repentant and the sick among the faithful They will exercise the ministry of reconciliation and comfort and They will present the needs and the prayers of the faithful to God the Father (cf. Hebrews 5:1-4).
- They will gather together God's family as a fellowship all of one mind and soul, and lead them through Christ, in the Spirit, to God the Father.
- In the midst of the flock they will adore him in spirit and in truth (cf. John 4:24).
- Finally they will labor in preaching and teaching (cf. 1 Timothy 5:17), believing what they have read while meditating on the law of the Lord, teaching what they have believed, and putting into practice what they have taught. [in the words of §104 of the Introduction]

Today’s entrance song is inspired by the official Entrance Antiphons “I will give you shepherds after my own heart, to feed you with knowledge and understanding” (Jeremiah 3:15) OR “Whoever serves me, must follow me, says the Lord; and where I am, my servant will also be” (John 12:26).

The Opening Prayer asks the Lord to grant X, Y, and Z the strength to persevere in serving God’s will so that by their ministry and life they may gain glory for God.

The Prayer over the Gifts asks the Lord to grant that the priestly ministry of Fathers X, Y, and Z may always be pleasing to God and bear in God's Church fruit that lasts for ever.

Today's Preface is a song in praise of the priesthood of Jesus Christ in which we all share in our baptism and from which Fathers X, Y, and Z have been called to receive a share in Jesus' ministry so that they may lead us in charity, nourish us with God's word, and renew us through the sacraments.

During the Eucharistic Prayer itself there will be a special prayer for Fathers X, Y, and Z.

Today's Communion Song is inspired by the official Communion Antiphons, "Go out to all the world, and preach the Gospel: I am with you always, says the Lord" (Mark 16:13; Mt. 28:20) OR "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28).

The last oration of the Mass, the Prayer after Communion, asks God to grant to Fathers X, Y, and Z and to all of us new life so that, bound to God in unflinching charity, we may offer worthy service to God's majesty.

The Sample Homily of the Bishop in the Rite of Ordination

Beloved brothers and sisters: because these our sons, who are your relatives and friends, are now to be advanced to the Order of priests, consider carefully the nature of the rank in the Church to which they are about to be raised. It is true that God has made his entire holy people a royal priesthood in Christ. Nevertheless, our great Priest himself, Jesus Christ, chose certain disciples to carry out publicly in his name, and on behalf of mankind, a priestly office in the Church. For Christ was sent by the Father and he in turn sent the Apostles into the world, so that through them and their successors, the Bishops, he might continue to exercise his office of Teacher, Priest, and Shepherd. Indeed, priests are established co-workers of the Order of Bishops, with whom they are joined in the priestly office and with whom they are called to the service of the people of God.

After mature deliberation, these, our brothers, are now to be ordained to the priesthood in the Order of the presbyterate so as to serve Christ the Teacher, Priest, and Shepherd, by whose ministry his body, that is, the Church, is built and grows into the people of God, a holy temple.

In being configured to Christ the eternal High Priest and joined to the priesthood of the Bishops, they will be consecrated as true priests of the New Testament, to preach the Gospel, to shepherd God's people, and to celebrate the sacred Liturgy, especially the Lord's sacrifice.

Now, dear sons, you are to be raised to the Order of the priesthood. For your part you will exercise the sacred duty of teaching in the name of Christ the Teacher. Impart to everyone the word of God which you have received with joy. Meditating on the law of the Lord, see that you believe what you read, that you teach what you believe, and that you practice what you teach.

In this way, let what you teach be nourishment for the people of God. Let the holiness of your lives be a delightful fragrance to Christ's faithful, so that by word and example you may build up the house which is God's Church.

Likewise you will exercise in Christ the office of sanctifying. For by your ministry the spiritual sacrifice of the faithful will be made perfect, being united to the sacrifice of Christ, which will be offered through your hands in an unbloody way on the altar, in union with the faithful, in the celebration of the sacraments. Understand, therefore, what you do and imitate what you celebrate. As celebrants of the mystery of the Lord's death and resurrection, strive to put to death whatever in your members is sinful, and to walk in newness of life.

Remember, when you gather others into the people of God through Baptism, and when you forgive sins in the name of Christ and the Church in the sacrament of Penance; when you comfort the sick with holy oil and celebrate the sacred rites, when you offer prayers of praise and thanks to God throughout the hours of the day, not only for the people of God but for the world -- remember then that you are taken from among men and appointed on their behalf for those things that pertain to God. Therefore, carry out the ministry of Christ the Priest with constant joy and genuine love, attending not to your own concerns but to those of Jesus Christ.

Finally, dear sons, exercising for your part the office of Christ, Head and Shepherd while united with the Bishop and subject to him, strive to bring the faithful together into one family, so that you may lead them to God the Father through Christ in the Holy Spirit. Keep always before your eyes the example of the Good Shepherd who came not to be served but to serve, and who came to seek out and save what was lost.