

Homily
Priesthood Ordination
June 7, 2025

“As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” Dear brothers and sisters, welcome to the Cathedral of St. Mary for this joyful celebration. To my brother priests and deacons, our beloved consecrated religious, and all the faithful, you are most welcome. To the representatives of our seminaries, who have played such an important part in the formation of our future priests, be assured of the gratitude of the entire Diocese of Fargo. And in a special way, I greet the family and friends of Deacon Tim, who have accompanied him on his journey, his pilgrimage toward this day. You have been a great blessing to him, and we are all grateful for the gift that you give to us in this man who will soon be a priest of Jesus Christ.

The ordination of a priest gives great hope to the Church. Whenever a priest is ordained, heaven rejoices and hell trembles. The priest is configured in a unique way to Jesus Christ, and is ordained to share with God’s people the saving grace of his life, death, and resurrection. He is a man like other men, touched with the effects of sin and hobbled with the same human weaknesses we all have. But he is loved by God in a singular way, called by our Lord just as the fishermen were called at the Sea of Galilee, set apart, and sent forth to make Christ present in the world. He is your son, your brother, your friend, but he will now also be a priest after the heart of Christ, one with the high priesthood of Jesus. As Pope Leo explained in an ordination homily just last week, the ordination of a priest doesn’t separate him from you or from the people he will serve. On the contrary, through his ordination, he is given to us and to the Church even more fully as a gift of God.

Dear son, through priestly ordination, you will now belong to a great fraternity of priests around the world. You will be part of the great priestly band that goes back to the time of the apostles. As a priest of Jesus Christ, you will be one with your brothers who are likewise sent into the world, a missionary and witness of the incarnation of our Lord and his death and resurrection. In union with the Church and with your bishop, commit yourself to proclaiming and teaching the saving truth of the Gospel. May the holy Word of God be always in your mind and heart, forming you in the likeness of Christ, who called himself the way, the truth, and the life.

You will also be configured as a sign and instrument of God’s healing mercy. Through your sacramental ministry in the confessional and at the bedside of those who are sick and dying, you will make present the mercy of Christ, who desires nothing more than to forgive sins and reconcile the world to his Father. Remember the example of great confessor priests, like St. John Vianney, who touched so many souls with the mercy of God during the course of his priestly life. May you likewise be a minister of his mercy.

I trust that every priest who is here today would tell you that the celebration of the Eucharist is the center and the apex of their priestly lives. The Eucharist, which is the source and summit of Christian life, is truly the heart of the priesthood, because the Eucharist is Christ himself. At the Last Supper, Jesus offered his Body and Blood to his apostles, but he also commanded them to continue doing what he had done. “Do this in memory of me.” Dear son, those words of Jesus

are spoken to you just as surely as they were spoken to Peter, James, John, and all the others. “Do this in memory of me.” Carry forward the sacrifice of Jesus upon the cross, and manifest the glory of his resurrection. In the Eucharist, which you will now celebrate as a priest, share with all of God’s people the gift and grace of his Paschal Mystery, his saving love for us all. You are being ordained as we come to the conclusion of our Eucharistic Revival, but the work of this revival continues, and the mission remains the same: to make known the saving love of Christ poured out for us in his own Body and Blood.

As I mentioned last night, your ordination to the priesthood takes place during a very special time of grace. We are in a Jubilee Year, a holy year when we are all summoned to draw closer to God. We are pilgrims of hope, impelled by God’s grace to strive ever onwards toward eternal life. Through your ordination and your priestly life, you will be a minister of hope to others, reminding them that Christ is still with us, just as he promised. Your priesthood will be an assurance that Christ remains with his Church and continues to offer us every grace we need to attain salvation. Your priesthood will be a validation of what St. Paul tells us: “Hope does not disappoint” when its foundation is Christ.

Young and old alike will now call you “Father,” because you will exercise a spiritual fatherhood among God’s people. From the riches of God’s grace, you will provide for them, protect them, lead them, encourage them, and seek out those who have grown distant from our family. But most importantly, you are called to love them with the heart of a father, and shepherd them with the heart of Christ. Keep always before your eyes the example and mission of Jesus, who says to you on this day of your ordination: “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”