



The Diocese of Knoxville

Living our Roman Catholic faith in East Tennessee

MEDIA ADVISORY
March 24, 2023
Contact Jim Wogan
865-660-0189 ■ jwogan@dioknox.org

The Chancery
805 Northshore Drive
Knoxville, Tenn. 37919
www.dioknox.org

Three men called to Holy Orders in Diocese of Knoxville Ordinations to the priesthood scheduled for June 10

KNOXVILLE--- Bishop Richard F. Stika has called to Holy Orders three transitional deacons to become priests of the Diocese of Knoxville at a Mass of Ordination on June 10 at the Cathedral of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

"This is a joyous time for me personally and for all the faithful of the Diocese of Knoxville, and it is especially fulfilling for Deacons Joseph Austin, Neil Blatchford, and Andrew Crabtree who will be ordained priests on that special day," Bishop Stika said.

"No one has a right to receive the sacrament of Holy Orders. One can only be called to this vocation by God," Bishop Stika said, citing canon law (CC 1578). "As bishop of the Diocese of Knoxville, I have reviewed the steps these men have made in preparing themselves for the priesthood. I am confident that they are now ready, and I look forward to presiding at their ordinations on June 10."

All three men were ordained transitional deacons by Bishop Stika in 2022. Following assignments at parishes last summer, they returned to St. Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in Indiana for their final year of academic work. They will graduate in May.

Deacon Joseph Austin is originally from Kingsport. His home parish is St. Dominic.

Deacon Neil Blatchford is originally from Athens. His home parish is the Cathedral of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Deacon Andrew Crabtree is originally from Madisonville. His home parish is St. Joseph the Worker.

(more)

Since it was established in 1988, 56 men have been ordained priests in the Diocese of Knoxville. Bishop Stika has ordained 21 men to the priesthood since his arrival in Knoxville in 2009.

“We continue to grow the Catholic Church in East Tennessee,” Bishop Stika said. “We do this in many ways, but the most important is through vocations to the priesthood. Next year, God willing, I will ordain three more men as priests. They are literally a gift to us from God.”

The Mass of Ordination to the Priesthood will be celebrated on June 10, 2023, at 10 a.m. at the Cathedral of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus in Knoxville. On June 3, Bishop Stika will ordain three men to the transitional diaconate. Donald Bo Beaty, Daniel Herman, and Michael Willey will continue their studies at St. Meinrad and are on track to be ordained priests in 2024.

###