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To shepherd in the name of Christ
Bishop Jugis ordains two new priests

by KATIE MOORE
staff writer

CHARLOTTE — Father Brandon Jones and Father Tri Vinh Truong formally dedicated their lives to serving the Lord, the church, and the people of God.

The men were ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Peter J. Jugis at St. Vincent de Paul Church in Charlotte June 7.

“The whole church of Charlotte praises God and thanks him today for the gift of two new priests for the church,” said Bishop Jugis.

During his homily, Bishop Jugis spoke of the graces bestowed upon the two men in the sacrament of holy orders.

“It is God who gives you this gift of holy orders,” said Bishop Jugis.

“Your being is changed by this powerful grace, making you a sacrament of Christ the high priest, capable of acting in the person of Christ,” he told them.

Bishop Jugis also spoke of the priests’ sacramental identification with Christ and how it is threefold. As priests they will take on the roles of teacher, nourishing people on the Gospel; sanctifier, administering the sacraments to the people; and shepherd, leading their flock to the pastures of eternal life.

“By your teaching, sanctifying and shepherding in the name of Christ, the Lord will work through your ministry to produce the fruit of salvation in the people you serve — the fruit which remains unto eternal life,” he said.

Father Brandon Jones

Father Jones grew up in Elkin, where he was raised in the Baptist church. He was first introduced to the Catholic faith at age 11, when his cousin — Father Jay Scott Newman, current pastor of St. Mary Church in Greenville, S.C. in the Diocese of Charleston — converted to the Catholic faith.

Father Conrad Kimbrough, then-pastor of St. Benedict Church in Greensboro was the first priest Father Jones ever met. “I remember I was 13-years-old at the time and he asked me, ‘Do you believe in the Bible?’ When I said yes, he said ‘Well my church wrote it.’”

“That was a formative event in my conversion to the faith,” said Father Jones.

At age 17, Father Jones was received into the Catholic Church at St. Stephen Church in Elkin. A few years later, while studying Latin at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, he first considered the priesthood.

He began his studies for the priesthood in 1993 when he entered the Theological College at Catholic University in Washington, D.C. Two years later, then-Bishop William G. Curlin assigned him to the Pontifical North American College in Rome.

In the following years, Father Jones considered a vocation with the Dominican order of priests; worked as a Latinist, editing and annotating documents; and earned licentiate degrees in philosophy and theology.

In 2006, he decided to return to the diocesan priesthood track and completed his studies at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Pennsylvania.

During the past five months, Father Jones has served as a transitional deacon at St. Vincent de Paul Church.

“A priest has to be primarily a man of prayer,” said Father Jones. “He has to have a lively interior life and to be in close communion with our Lord in order to bring him to others.” Father Jones has been assigned to serve as parochial vicar at St. Patrick Cathedral in Charlotte.

Father Tri Vinh Truong

Father Truong was born in Vinh Long Province, Vietnam. In 1994, his family was granted refugee status, allowing them to immigrate to the United States.

After living for a year in Atlanta, the family moved to Charlotte, where they currently reside. Father Truong graduated from St. Xavier University in Chicago and worked for a health care company for several years. But, a vocation to the priesthood continued to call to him.

“I’ve wanted to be a priest for a long time,” he said.

He attended Mount St. Mary’s College and Seminary in Emmitsburg, Md. where he studied canon law, theology, systematic theology, homiletics (preaching) and Scripture.

During his last year at seminary he served as a transitional deacon at Immaculate Conception Church in the Diocese of Harrisburg in Pennsylvania.

As a priest he said he is looking forward to “carrying out the saving work of God in Christ Jesus.”

“I’m looking to serve the people in any way that I can,” he said. “My main goal is to carry out Christ’s salvation to the world.

Father Truong has been assigned to serve as parochial vicar at Holy Family Church in Clemmons.

Ordination Mass

Concelebrants of the ordination Mass at St. Vincent de Paul included Abbot Placid Solari of Belmont Abbey; Msgr. Mauricio W. West, vicar general and chancellor; Father Christopher

Gober, director of diocesan vocations; priests serving in the Diocese of Charlotte; and visiting priests. Also in attendance was Bishop Emeritus William G. Curlin.

During the rite of ordination, Fathers Jones and Truong made their promises to fulfill the office of the priesthood. Kneeling, they placed their hands between Bishop Jugis' hands in a promise of obedience to him and to his successors.

The congregation was invited to join in prayer for the church, its people and the priestly candidates as they lay prostrate before the altar.

During the rite's most solemn moment, Fathers Jones and Truong knelt before Bishop Jugis, who laid his hands on their heads. The celebration of the sacrament of holy orders was completed as the bishop extended his hands over the kneeling candidates and prayed the prayer of consecration.

The new priests were vested with stoles and chasubles — outer garments of the priestly office. Bishop Jugis anointed their hands with sacred chrism and they were then presented with a chalice and paten signifying their roles as celebrants of the Eucharist.

The newly ordained priests then joined their brother priests to concelebrate the Mass, thus opening a new chapter in each of their lives.

"The church has gained two fine men who have sacrificed much to follow Christ," said Father Gober. "Their witness gives hope both to the faithful and to the many seminarians who will accompany them shortly."

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