

To be men ‘filled with wisdom and the Holy Spirit’

Two diocesan seminarians ordained as transitional deacons

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Two seminarians for the Diocese of Charlotte recently took steps closer to the priesthood.

Bishop Peter J. Jugis ordained John Eckert and David Miller to the transitional diaconate in St. Turibius Chapel at the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio April 26. Also ordained to the transitional diaconate was Andrew Budzinski, a seminarian for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

Bishop Jugis was joined at the altar by priest-faculty of the seminary and by visiting priests from the deacon candidates’ respective dioceses.

In his homily, Bishop Jugis spoke of the deacons’ role in helping their respective bishops and priests in three special ministries: the ministry of the altar, as a “servant of the sacred liturgy”; the ministry of the Word, “to proclaim and teach with conviction” the teachings of Christ and the church; and the ministry of charity, marked with “the indelible spiritual character which configures him to Christ the servant.”

Bishop Jugis urged the deacon candidates to “be men of good reputation, filled with wisdom and the Holy Spirit, as were those once chosen by the Apostles.”

Following the homily, the candidates made commitments to permanent celibacy, and each stated his willingness to perform what the church requires of deacons — humble and loving assistance given to the bishop, proclamation of the mysteries of the faith as taught by Christ, a deepening commitment to ecclesial prayer and a continued renewal of life in the example of Christ.

The Litany of the Saints followed, during which the candidates lay prostrate before the altar.

Bishop Jugis completed the act of ordination in a prayer of consecration after the laying on of hands, a Scriptural gesture that signifies a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit, by which men are configured to Christ in holy orders.

Each new deacon was then presented with a Book of the Gospels, and was charged by Bishop Jugis: “Receive the Gospel of Christ, whose herald you have become. Believe what you read, teach what you believe, and practice what you teach.”

Ordination to the diaconate traditionally takes place toward the end of the seminarians’ third year of graduate study and marks the final stages of preparation for the priesthood.

The deacons are authorized to baptize, proclaim the Gospel, preach, officiate at weddings and funerals, administer sacramentals and care for the dying.

Deacons Budzinski, Eckert and Miller will continue their studies during the 2009-10 academic year, after which they will be ordained to the priesthood upon completion of the master of divinity degree program.