

Cardinal Keeler ordains nine new deacons

As nine candidates knelt before Cardinal William H. Keeler May 19, the archbishop of Baltimore placed his hands on each man's head and ordained them a deacon.

Thunderous applause reverberated throughout the packed Cathedral of Mary Our Queen, Homeland, during the 10 a.m. Ordination to the Diaconate, after each of the nine candidates completed his four-year odyssey to serve the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

All nine men were deemed worthy to administer the sacred ministries in the archdiocese by Father Patrick M. Carrion, director of deacon formation.

Once they were officially deacons, the cardinal called on his "sons" to serve the people with the same love and joy they would devote to God.

Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt, Lee Ashby Benson III, Phillip George Seneschal, Steven Christopher Rubio, Harbey Santiago-Mendez, Kevin Francis Reid, Hiram Walker Smith, David Lewis Tengwall and George Hale Sisson were then warmly embraced by the bishops, priests and fellow deacons at the altar and officially welcomed to the clergy.

As Cardinal Keeler announced the new deacons' assignments, he made a special note of the strident applause for Deacon Rubio, citing "it sounds like he has his own cheering section."

He also acknowledged the attendance of Bishop John C. Bauerschmidt of the Episcopal Diocese of Tennessee, brother of Deacon Bauerschmidt.

Deacons serve in hospitals, prisons and parishes in a variety of capacities and the array of professional experiences the new deacons bring to the archdiocese include careers as college faculty members, businessmen, a health-care provider, an engineer, an attorney and a fire-safety specialist.

Each new deacon is empowered to baptize, witness marriages, oversee social justice programs, outreach ministries to the poor and execute educational tracks, Father Carrion said.

Throughout the course of the past four years, each new deacon took courses in theology, leadership and spirituality, participated in two different internships and immersed themselves in retreats.

During the ceremony, one of the Gospel readings was recited in Spanish and Cardinal Keeler made note in his homily that some of the needs of immigrants are being neglected, suggesting an obligation to fill the void.

“With humble charity, resolve to assist the priests,” the cardinal advised the new deacons. “Always be an example of the body and blood of Christ, as you are the administrator at the altar.”