

Jesuit Ordinations

Welcome to the Chapel of Loyola College, for this Eucharistic Celebration and for the ordination to the priesthood of Michael J. Guzik of the Province of New York and of James J. Kelly, of the Province of Maryland.

With genuine gratitude I acknowledge the invitation extended me by Father Timothy B. Brown and by Father Gerald J. Chojnacki, the Provincials of the Baltimore and New York Provinces of the Society of Jesus, to impose ordaining hands today on two deacons of the Society of Jesus. It is a humbling task to be a servant to God's Holy Spirit in the making of new priests. It is also one that has much potential for great good as their priestly lives unfold.

To those whose example, prayer, encouragement and support have brought them to this day I offer these words of deep appreciation. Parents, family members, priests, classmates, and friends – all have helped through the years. Those to be ordained are counting on your continued prayers for them, and for you unabated support.

The day before yesterday both the deacons and their Provincials kindly came to join me for lunch in my residence downtown, next door to the nation's first cathedral. They had selected the readings you have hard proclaimed at this ordination Mass. As I do with the deacons of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, I asked them to tell me what motivated their choices. The priests-to-be helped me to prepare this homily; their reflections are now intermingled with my own.

(Is 61:1-3, 10-11) The Prophet Isaiah had a clear description of his mission. Jesus took and used his words as he described what he was about right at the beginning of his public life. "He has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted. To proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners."

One of the deacons told me that this resonates with a statement of the General Congregation of the Jesuits, one, I suspect, that called for an option for the poor, in keeping with much of what Pope John Paul and the Gospel and example of Jesus urge us to do.

It is a passage with a remarkable warmth of tone. We can almost hear Jesus

repeating these words in the synagogue of Nazareth (cf. Luke 4:18-19). Anointed by the Holy Spirit, he was setting forth his personal agenda as the missionary Son of God. His was to be a unique quality of service, as one who took in his hand the staff of a veteran for service to others, sisters and brothers in Christ Jesus all.

The words our deacons have chosen are also words of hope. Isaiah offers those returning from exile, broken, dispirited and dispossessed, an invitation back home that touches and lifts hearts. A new spirit of hope is engendered. In that hope, exiles come home, even as, we pray, through the ministry of these new priests many who have been caught up in the secular culture may find their way back home to a faith that nourishes the spirit and charts the course to God.

(2 Cor 5:14-20) When we talked about the second reading, the deacons recalled the early Jesuits and their dedication to preaching the word of God. I told them how moved I had been by a visit several years ago to the Shrine of the North American Jesuit Martyrs at Midland in the Province of Ontario, so near to Toronto that last year for World Youth Day, a Jesuit pilgrimage of a thousand young people could visit it and be inspired.

When the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians, he did so with enormous enthusiasm. At the outset, he said, "... the love of Christ impels us, once we have come to the conviction that one died for all...." That is the great wonder, that God has loved us first, and more than anyone else has his love reached out to us. It is a truth we must let sink in, so that it surrounds and encloses us and puts us in total peace. But then it becomes a truth that simply has to be expressed and shared with others. St. Isaac Jogues, a long-time favorite of mine, and the patron saint of a