

St. Louis Archdiocese ordains largest number of priests in 21 years

ST. LOUIS - When Archbishop Raymond L. Burke of St. Louis ordained nine men to the priesthood for the archdiocese May 24, it was the largest ordination class for the archdiocese since 1987.

In addition five other seminarians from St. Louis were being ordained in coming weeks for other dioceses.

In his homily at the ordination Mass, Archbishop Burke urged the congregation to pray for the nine men "so that they may always and in everything conform themselves to the grace conferred upon them in ordination, that they may be holy shepherds of the flock whom God the Father entrusts to their pastoral care."

"By your love of the sacred priesthood, help them to see the sublime truth and beauty of their priestly vocation, and to conform their every thought, their every word and their every action to their priestly identity and mission," he told the congregation.

The archbishop urged the nine men to be "good and holy shepherds" who are "attentive to guide God's people in the way of justice which leads to lasting peace."

He also told them their "priestly teaching and guidance will inspire and strengthen all of the faithful in the transformation of the culture of violence and death, in which we live, into a civilization of selfless love and life."

The new priests, most of whom are from the St. Louis area, are: Fathers Matthew Barnard, Patrick Driscoll, Brian Hecktor, Michael Houser, Eric Kunz, Edward Nemeth, Kevin Schroeder, James Theby and Noah Waldman. Each of them earned a master of divinity degree and master of arts in theology degree from Kenrick-Glennon Seminary.

After the ordination, 100 men remained enrolled at the seminary and more than half of them are studying to be priests for the St. Louis Archdiocese. Four seminarians were recently ordained as transitional deacons for the archdiocese.

One of the new priests, Father Waldman, described his faith journey to the priesthood as “atypical,” because he was raised in a Jewish home and attended three Catholic seminaries.

“As you might imagine, my Jewish mother was not exactly thrilled to have her only son become a Catholic priest,” he told the St. Louis Review, archdiocesan newspaper. “However, she has seen the happiness I have experienced in my vocation thus far; and she has also experienced my own increase in love and appreciation for her.”

Father Waldman added that his mother and the rest of his family “have grown in understanding and appreciating my vocation.”

“This is the work of the Holy Spirit,” he added.