

Three new priests ordained for Archdiocese of Baltimore

As the three newest priests of the Archdiocese of Baltimore stepped out of the sanctuary and began walking down the long aisle of the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen at the conclusion of their June 23 ordination Mass, a ripple of applause broke out in a congregation of hundreds.

Building to a crescendo, the ovation soon included cheers of approval as people from across the archdiocese reached out to shake the hands of the new priests as they passed by.

The beaming men nodded, waved and grasped the hands of the boisterous well-wishers as a choir sang a regal setting of “Lift High the Cross.”

It was a fittingly joyful end to one of the most important days on the archdiocesan liturgical calendar.

Archbishop William E. Lori ordained Fathers William Keown, John Martínez and John Streifel in an ancient liturgical rite that lasted approximately two hours.

Cardinal Edwin F. O’Brien, Archbishop Lori’s predecessor, attended the celebration, along with Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus Denis J. Madden; Auxiliary Bishops Adam J. Parker and Mark E. Brennan; and many priests and deacons of the archdiocese.

“Joy is the hallmark of this, the day of your priestly ordination,” Archbishop Lori said in his **homily**. “The day of ordination and the day of your first Mass do not last forever. Rather the intense joy and excitement of these days must give way to a more permanent joy, a lasting joy. A beatitude that endures through thick and thin.”

He gave the men three paths that will help lead them to living out their priestly lives joyfully: finding companionship in ministry; living with a clear conscience through reconciliation and spiritual direction; offering pastoral charity, and showing a self-sacrificing love for the people they serve.

After the homily, the men declared their intentions to undertake the office of the priesthood in the Promise of the Elect. They then prostrated themselves in the sanctuary as the congregation called upon the Communion of Saints, praying for the candidates in the Litany of Supplication.

“The Litany of Saints is when it really struck me,” Father Keown said. “This entire cathedral was praying for us. I just tried to quiet my mind and shut up and let the graces flow over me.”

The archbishop conferred the gift of the Holy Spirit upon the men through the laying on of hands. One by one, dozens of priests repeated the gesture, placing their hands on the three kneeling men and praying for them.

With the Prayer of Ordination, the Sacrament of Holy Orders was conferred upon the new priests, and they were vested by priests with whom they have a special bond.

A recorded livestream of the ordination follows. Story continues below.

Father Matthew Buening, chaplain of the Towson University Newman Center, vested Father Keown; Monsignor Richard Hilgartner, pastor of St. Joseph in Cockeysville, vested Father Martínez; and Father Stephen Hook, pastor of Our Lady of the Chesapeake in Lake Shore vested Father Streifel.

As the men were anointed with sacred Chrism at their baptisms and confirmations, their hands were anointed and consecrated to priesthood to serve publicly as Jesus Christ’s instruments of the church.

The newly ordained priests were ceremoniously handed the bread and the wine, and given the fraternal kiss of welcoming from their brother priests before the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

The archbishop knelt in front of the altar near the end of the Mass to receive the first blessing from each of the new priests.

After Mass, family members and many of the faithful formed long lines in three

of the cathedral's chapels to receive their own priestly blessings from Father Keown, Father Martínez and Father Streifel.

"I'm very proud of him and I think it's the right vocation for him," said Carol Keown, Father Keown's mother.

A former chief petty officer in the U.S. Navy, Father Keown received a surprise after his ordination from his naval friends. Retired Navy Chief Petty Officer Matthew Moucha and Senior Chief Petty Officer Jim Murphy presented their former colleague a new chalice engraved with an image of a mariner's crucifix.

Among Father Streifel's cheerleaders was a longtime friend, Christy Cheeks. Cheeks was his youth minister when he was a student at St. Maria Goretti High School in Hagerstown, and she and her husband stepped in to mentor Father Streifel after his parents died.

"Knowing him and his discernment process, and the honor of sort of stepping in," Cheeks said, "it's been a blessing."

"I've been so extremely thankful for all the support from priests and parishioners these last couple years," Father Streifel said. "It's really been the force, the grace, that has kept me going and has helped me to grow into the person that God has asked me to be as a priest."

Kelvin Martínez felt very emotional at the ordination of his older brother, to whom he has always looked up.

"He's a very organized person, a person who is dedicated," Martínez said, who made the trip from Orlando, Fla., for his brother's ordination.

"I'm actually really happy, not only because I'm a priest now, but because I've had the courage to say yes, and was gifted by the Holy Spirit to preserve throughout these years," Father Martínez said. "And I just ask everybody who was here, and all those who weren't, to continue to pray for the ministry I'm going to begin now in the diocese."

Father Martínez is native of Puerto Rico who received encouragement in his vocation from parishioners of St. Clare in Essex, some of whom attended the Mass. Some of the readings and hymns at the ordination were proclaimed or sung in Spanish.

Beginning July 1, Father Keown will serve as associate pastor at St. Louis in Clarksville and St. Francis of Assisi in Fulton; Father Martínez at St. Joseph in Cockeysville; and Father Streifel at St. John the Evangelist in Frederick and St. Joseph-on-Carrollton Manor in Buckeystown.

“Each of the men are very different and bring unique skills sets to the archdiocese and to see that they will be ordained for the service for the church is just so amazing,” said Father Steven Roth, vocations director. “It’s also an opportunity to realize that we need to keep praying – the work is sure not done – and to really ask the Lord to send us more men like the three ordained today.”

George P. Matysek Jr. contributed to this story.

*For more photos, visit our Smugmug gallery **here**.*

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