

**Homily Outline for the Ordination of Transitional Deacons  
Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception  
April 26, 2019**

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Bishop of Springfield in Illinois**

- I. Litany of the Saints
  - A. Most visually dramatic moment of the Rite of Ordination
    1. Not the most important or significant; that would be the imposition of hands, which is the actual sign of ordination.
    2. But the image of the *ordinandi* lying prostrate on the floor while the Litany of the Saints is being chanted just before the imposition of hands is what strikes people visually and is often most memorable.
  - B. The Litany of the Saints starts with invocation of the Lord's mercy.
    1. Important to remember as no one is worthy of ordination.
    2. We can be effective ministers only through God's grace.
  - C. Then comes the invocation of angels and saints.
    1. St. Michael – it is fitting that we have three Michaels: Michael Berndt, Michael Meinhart and Michael Trummer.
      - a) We recite the Prayer to St. Michael in most of our parishes after Mass.
      - b) As St. Michael led the angels in battle against Lucifer and the fallen angels, may he intercede for you in your ministry to fight evil and promote good.
    2. David – seminarian David Beagles is named after a great King of the Old Testament.
      - a) Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the City of David, and is said to have been born into the House of David.
      - b) As David slew the giant Goliath with his slingshot, may you slay the giants of evil with your slingshot of truth and love!
    3. St. Dominic – Dominic Vahling bears the name of a great saint, the founder of the Order of Preachers.
      - a) We have many Dominican Sisters, Nuns and Friars in our diocese.
      - b) May St. Dominic intercede for you to be a great preacher of the Word!
    4. St. Peter – we have two seminarians named after St. Peter: Peter Chineke and Peter Kosk.
      - a) Jesus founded His Church on the Rock of St. Peter.
      - b) May people be able to rely on the foundation of your faith to give them spiritual strength!
    5. St. Paul – where there is Peter, there is also Paul! We have seminarian Paul Luczak.

- a) Paul Luczak, Peter Chineke and Peter Kosk have all come from far-away lands, sent, in a sense, as apostles to be missionaries here in our diocese.
  - b) We have the two great statues of these saints, Peter & Paul, at the top of these pillars in our sanctuary. As St. Paul is depicted with the two-edged sword, may your preaching pierce the hearts of your listeners with the two-edged sword of truth and love!
6. I also encourage you to pray to my patron saints, Thomas More and John Fisher.
- a) St. Thomas More was a lawyer and St. John Fisher was a bishop. The bishop who is ordaining you also happens to be a lawyer!
  - b) As Ss. Thomas More and John Fisher stood firm in the faith, may they give you courage to stand firm in the faith even in the face of great opposition and isolation.
- II. There are three other holy people that I suggest as models for you, as I met each of them personally and they have been role models for me: Pope St. John Paul II, St. Theresa of Calcutta and Cardinal George.
- A. I saw Pope St. John Paul II in person first in Chicago when he visited in 1979, then several times in Rome when I was doing my graduate studies.
- 1. When my parents came to Rome in 1988 to celebrate their 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, we attended Mass with Pope John Paul II at Castel Gandolfo.
  - 2. I also had occasion to concelebrate morning Mass with him in his private chapel on several occasions; he would always be in the chapel praying before we arrived.
  - 3. May you always take the time to recollect yourselves and prepare yourselves before the celebration of the Mass.
  - 4. Pope St. John Paul II appointed me as bishop in 2003, so you are being ordained by a bishop who was named bishop by a canonized saint!
- B. Cardinal Francis George, the late Archbishop of Chicago, ordained me as bishop, so you share in a great ordination lineage.
- 1. Cardinal George was a towering intellectual figure, but he also had a great pastoral heart.
  - 2. May you always continue to learn and nurture your intellectual life, but may you also have a large pastoral heart to put what you have learned at the service of the people under your spiritual care.
- C. I first met St. Theresa of Calcutta when I was doing my graduate studies in Rome.
- 1. I used to celebrate Mass for the Missionaries of Charity at San Gregorio near the Coliseum.
  - 2. Once as I was celebrating Mass, I saw a small figure huddled near the potbelly stove at the back of the chapel and I realized it was Mother Teresa.
  - 3. After Mass she came to the sacristy to thank me for celebrating Mass. That was in the days before cell phones, so I don't have a "selfie" photo of Mother Teresa with me!

4. I mention Mother Teresa as an example of service, as you men are about to be ordained into a ministry of service.
5. We cannot always serve the poorest of the poor as she did, but Mother Teresa provides a powerful example of combining strong faith with dedicated service to those in need.

III. I encourage you to pray to these saints not just today during the Litany of the Saints, but throughout your lives.

- A. From time to time, it is good to prostrate yourself before the Blessed Sacrament and invoke the intercession of the saints.
- B. May these great saints help you to be saints and lead people to Our Lord, whom we will receive in this Eucharist and with whom we hope to share in eternal life.
- C. May God give us this grace. Amen.