

*The following is a reflection I wrote shortly after my ordination as a transitional deacon.*

On June 3, 2006 I was ordained a Transitional Diaconate of the Diocese of Rochester at Sacred Heart Cathedral!

It has been six years in the coming (with one more to go for priesthood God-willing). The ordination was a wonderful experience along with my first mass as a deacon the next day in Watkins Glen at my home parish St. Mary's of the Lake, part of the Schuyler Catholic Community.



Being ordained was certainly a grace filled sacrament for me. There is a lot of things that go on in the ordination. In all of this the Holy Spirit was definitely present for me.

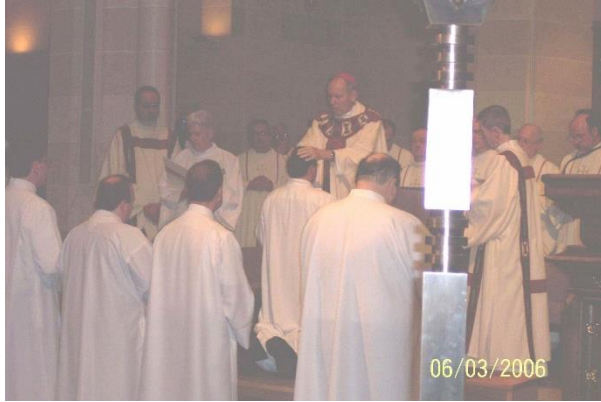
I remember a conversation with my spiritual director about three months before ordination. He asked me how I thought I might feel at my ordination. At that point, my answer was that I didn't really know but that I wasn't expecting to be overwhelmed by the experience. I was not looking to my ordination as a single moment in time but rather as the culmination of six years of formation and study. I figured it might hit me at some point, whether it be at the ordination itself, before the ordination, at my first mass as a deacon the day after my ordination. Little did I know how I might feel.

I finished the spring semester and came home on May 5<sup>th</sup>. So, I was left with almost a full month before my ordination. The first task I set after was to meet with the person who was planning the reception in my home parish, and the person coordinating the music, and creating a program for my first mass as a deacon. I am eternally thankful for these two people because I quickly discovered my brain was mush. I was trying to think about things such as the reception, the first deacon mass, ordination, and to have some time for fun. Yet, in the days of final preparation I found it very difficult to focus on much of anything.

Thus, I was very glad that I had planned my canonical retreat at Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre to be during this time period because it was the one week where I was able to quiet myself and reflect on the promises of diaconal ordination and how I felt. I knew I was ready for ordination.

The last item of preparation before the ordination was the rehearsal the night before. I remember thinking 'how am I going to remember all the things I am supposed to do?' I was ordained along with four permanent deacons and one other transitional deacon. We all had that same question of how are we going to remember all this.

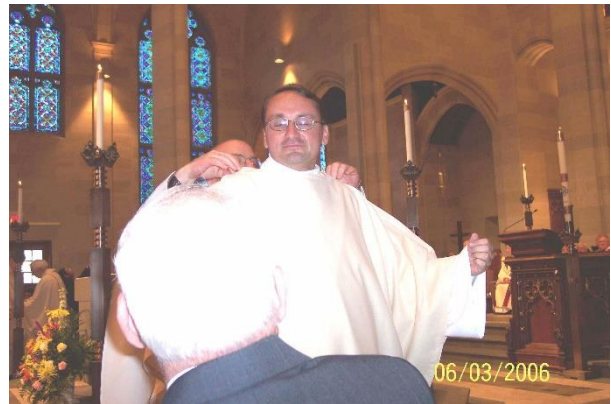
Then, it was home to bed. Surprisingly, I did sleep ok for a few hours but I was lying in bed awake by 5 a.m. When I got out of bed, my mind was racing from one thought to the next. I did the Office of Reading and Morning Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours and began to relax and appreciate the fact that it was the day of my ordination to the transitional Diaconate.



As the ordination began, I was relatively calm. After the proclamation of the Gospel, all of us being ordained were called by name. The time has come.

The bishop then offered a good homily. While I cannot remember what he said, what I do remember was thinking how well I spoke of what I was feeling and thinking. At times, I felt like Bishop Clark was speaking directly to me, seemingly even making eye contact with me. I don't know if he was really looking at me personally but I felt connected to him. Since I was about to take a promise of obedience to Bishop Clark, it felt good to feel connected to him.

As the ordination proceeded, I remember thinking as we went through each part; the promises, the prostration during the Litany of Saints, the laying of hands, the prayer of consecration, the vesting with the stole and dalmatic, and the reception of the Gospel, that this is the moment, I am now becoming a deacon. I felt grace.



As I returned to my seat for the Liturgy of the Eucharist, I was all smiles. (Afterwards, several people commented on how I was all smiles throughout the whole ordination.) I just sat in thought, 'Now I am a deacon.'



After the mass was over, I was amazed by how many offered congratulations. There were pictures and a newspaper interview before I finally got to lunch. Then, I drove home reflecting on the day.

The next day I deaconed at the 10 a.m. mass and gave the homily. It was Pentecost Sunday which is very appropriate for ordination. ([Click here](#) to see the text of my homily. Please note that this is not the *exact homily* I delivered as I preached from the heart without my notes in front of me but this is the text I prepared as I developed my homily with the help of the Holy Spirit.)

It was wonderful to be in my home parish to deacon for the first time. (My [homily](#) helps explain why). It felt so good to do this with the community that showed me the calling God had for me.

Mass was followed by a reception. I am an introvert so the thought of greeting everyone at the reception was intimidating but it was another powerful experience for me as the people offered congratulations. Once again, people commented on how I had a big smile through the entire mass. The way I was feeling I couldn't help but smile because I felt that good.

I write this five days later and I still spend a lot of time each day feeling so good to serve God as a deacon.

One year to priesthood . . .

