

The Diocese of Great Falls

P.O. Box 1399

Great Falls, Montana

59403

Ordination of Greg Staudinger
St. Patrick's Co-Cathedral
April 2, 1980
Most Rev. Thomas J. Murphy

Ordination Homily and Instruction

We gather together this evening in the midst of the most sacred week of the Church year, a week we designate as Holy Week. During this week, we celebrate once again that incredible saving action of Jesus through His passion, death and resurrection. It is a sacred time; it is a religious moment; it is a time when we become most conscious of the servant role which the Lord lived and gave to us as an example.

The message of the Gospel that was shared with us is a message of the Lord's example of service to others and the challenge given to His followers to serve others. In so many ways in the world today, that message is not only heard; it is followed. Young and old, single and married, women and men have all heard that challenge of the Lord and are living it out in their daily lives.

But tonight, however, a young man will make a commitment of service to God and to others by requesting and receiving ordination to the diaconate. Diaconate is the action of a Church calling a person to a service of others through a ministry of the word, of the altar, and of charity. As a deacon, during the coming year in preparation for priesthood, he will be asked to serve others as Christ did - by sharing with others the nourishment of the Eucharist, by bringing God's word to all people, by sharing new life and unity among Christians in those moments of baptism and marriage where ~~we~~^{As} will be present, and by living out a life of charity in service to others. Diaconate involves the reception of the ability to perform certain tasks and functions, but it is basically a call to a commitment to a life style of being a servant of the Lord as an ordained person.

Greg Staudinger comes before us this evening to be ordained for service to God and to the Christian community. But this is possible only because so many others have offered their gifts of service to him. Greg would not be here this evening if it were not for the gifts of service given him by his parents through their faith and prayer, a tremendous gift that is unequalled. Greg has received many gifts from his brothers and sister, his relatives and friends who have served him in many ways. Likewise, the parish, the teachers, the schools - from Little Flower to Billings Central, from Josephinum to Colledgeville - have all served Greg Staudinger so that he might make this commitment tonight to serve others. Diaconate makes all of us aware of the way in which the Lord continues to live among us through the service we give and receive from one another.

And so, Greg, you come to this sanctuary to declare publicly and freely your desire to serve God and others by ordination to the diaconate. The Lord

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will share a rich and bountiful gift with you. But you, in turn, are asked to share a gift with the Lord and the Christian community.

You will be asked, Greg, to accept the responsibilities of being an ordained minister of the Church, to live out that responsibility in word and action, in faith and prayer. You will be asked to preach the Word of God, but you will also be expected to live it. You will be asked to share a faith and a tradition with others in accord with the teachings of the Church. You will be asked to make a lifetime commitment to celibacy out of ~~love~~ love for the Lord and for the Church as a witness to the love you are asked to share with others. You will be asked to become a ~~prayer~~ pray-er for the Christian community in a daily commitment to the Liturgy of the Hours. You are asked to serve a Church of Eastern Montana that is not confined to one location or to one ministry, but includes a total people of God in all their needs.

And so Greg, much is asked of you this evening. But much will be given in return. The Lord promises you His grace and assistance. He offers you his support and encouragement. And you have that rich gift of the prayers of all of us here this evening and countless others who rejoice with you and thank you for the gift you share with others of yourself.

The Lord in the Gospel this evening has given us the example. He came not to be served, but to serve. Let us celebrate that example of the Lord in what we are about to do.