

PRIESTHOOD ORDINATION 2021 REMARKS

**FR. JOSEPH CATAFAGO, FR. MICHAEL LOMBARDI AND FR.
DOMINIK WEGIEL**

BISHOP JOHN O. BARRES

ST. AGNES CATHEDRAL

DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE

Year of St. Joseph and Year of St. Ignatius Loyola

JUNE 19, 2021

I. Fr. Joseph Catafago, Fr. Michael Lombardi, and Fr. Dominik Wegiel, with the People of God in the Diocese of Rockville Centre, I congratulate you and your families on your Ordination to the Catholic Priesthood.

I congratulate, too, those who helped guide your formation: Bishop William Murphy; our auxiliary and retired bishops; your pastors and mentors; your brother priests and friends; and your Vocation Director, Fr. Sean Magaldi, and his predecessors, particularly Fr. Joseph Fitzgerald.

In a special way, I congratulate your formators. Many grace us with their presence today. They are proud and joyful witnesses of your ordination. I am especially pleased to welcome the rectors of your seminaries: Bishop James Massa of St. Joseph's Seminary (Dunwoodie) and Fr. Brian Kiely of Pope St. John XXIII Seminary.

Bishop Massa and Fr. Kiely: Know of our gratitude for the work of priestly formation you and your faculties undertake for the good of the Church. Please give our deepest thanks to the priests, deacons, religious and lay men and women in your care who helped to form our newly ordained.

II. Brothers, priesthood is a gift to be shared, so we are excited – as are you! - about your first parish assignments, where you will share the gift entrusted to you.

At dinner on Thursday, I shared their first parish assignments with the men.

Fr. Catafago will serve St. Anthony of Padua Church in East Northport.

Fr. Lombardi will serve St. Patrick's Church in Smithtown.

And Fr. Wegiel will serve the Church of St. Mary's in Manhasset.

Brothers, I know under the wise shepherding of Fr. Sheridan, Msgr. Walden, and Fr. Romeo, you will continue to grow. Trust them, learn from them and treasure the experience of serving the Church!

As we celebrate this Priesthood Ordination, we look for and pray for those Christ may be calling to the priesthood. Never underestimate the power of your invitation for them to consider God's will. Encourage their discernment and work closely with our newly formed *Vocation Promotion and Recruitment Team*: Fr. Rob Ketcham, Fr. Michael Duffy, Fr. Nelson Marquez, Fr. Matt Browne, Fr. John Crozier, and Mr. Nolan Reynolds.

III. There is a powerful prayer in the Rite of Baptism. Called the *Ephphatha Prayer*, it reads: "May the Lord Jesus, who made the deaf to hear and the mute to speak, grant that you may soon receive his word with your ears and profess the faith with your lips, to the glory and praise of God the Father. Amen."

This baptismal prayer flows into the prayers of the Rite of Ordination to the Priesthood.

Fr. Catafago, Fr. Lombardi and Fr. Wegiel, *may the Lord continue to touch your ears to receive his word* now as priests, so that you may listen compassionately to the People of God.

Repeat often each day the words of Samuel: "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." (Samuel 3:10)

As you know, Christocentric listening is critical to the Catholic priesthood. How vital has been the humble, attentive, and charitable listening of a dedicated Catholic priest to help us follow the path marked out by the Light and Lamp of the Word of God! How necessary it is still in our fragmented world!

Brothers, such prayerful listening - rooted in hours of quietly contemplating the Word of God before the Blessed Sacrament – is at the heart of priestly life.

As we prepare to celebrate the Episcopal Ordination and Installation of Bishop-elect William Koenig on July 13th, we give thanks for the powerful way he listens as a Catholic priest and the powerful way he will listen to the People of God in Delaware and the Eastern Shore of Maryland as the Tenth Bishop of the Diocese of Wilmington.

Brothers, learn from the example of Bishop-elect Koenig. He represents the evangelizing presbyterate of Rockville Centre, a presbyterate to which you now belong. Be like your brother priests, and receive the Word of God, so you can better listen to the People of God with compassion and wisdom.

IV. Listening to God is nothing new for you. You have listened attentively throughout your life and especially during seminary formation. Indeed, listening led you to this joyful day.

Fr. Catafago, during your time at Holy Trinity High School you learned to listen to God’s Word and His Will for you and your life. In this past year you studied the theological imagination of Flannery O’Connor and its impact and application to Catholic Evangelization. May your listening to the Holy Spirit present in the inspired texts of Sacred Scripture help you discern creative strategies of evangelizing the challenging culture in which we live.

Fr. Lombardi, your years working in the field of architecture helped you listen to Christ and see His expressions of the unity of beauty and truth in the world. In his first encyclical *Lumen Fidei* (2013), Pope Francis writes: “Faith makes us appreciate the architecture of human relationships because it grasps their ultimate foundation and definitive destiny in God, in his love, and thus sheds light on the art of building...” (51). And in his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* (2020), the Holy Father speaks of “the Art and Architecture of Peace” (228-233). May the architecture of your ontological identity as a Catholic priest help you be an architect of Catholic evangelization, pastoral charity, and peace.

Fr. Wegiel, you have listened to God in your study of Applied Mathematics and Economics while at Stony Brook University and more recently in your

study of ecumenism and the history of the Catholic-Lutheran dialogue. May your attentive spirit of prayerful listening as a Catholic priest lead many to be consecrated in truth. We also ask today for the intercession of your ancestor – your great-grandfather’s aunt -- the Polish lay woman Blessed Angela Salawa (1881-1922) who served the wounded in World War I hospitals.

Brothers, listen to the Word of God! May He who has begun the good work in you bring it to fulfillment!

Mary, Mother of the Church, pray for us!

St. Joseph, in the Year of St. Joseph and in anticipation of Father’s Day, pray for us!

St. Ignatius Loyola, in the Ignatian Year, pray for us!

St. John Vianney, patron of all priests, pray for us!

St. John Neumann, pray for us!

Pope St. John Paul II, pray for us!

Blessed Fr. Michael McGivney, pray for us!

Blessed Angela Salawa, pray for us!