

Ordination to the Priesthood  
David Mayovsky, Kurt Nagel, James Northrop  
St. James Cathedral  
Seattle, Washington  
June 7, 1997  
Most Reverend Thomas J. Murphy  
Archbishop of Seattle  
Homily

My friends, you have no idea how good it is to be here this morning with you. It is especially good to be with David Mayovsky, Kurt Nagel, and James Northrop. Though I have seen each of them individually, this is the first time I have seen them together in six months. The last time was in Providence Hospital last December before they celebrated their ordination to the Diaconate. I had hoped to celebrate their diaconate, but I was unable to do so. I promised then that I would pray that I would be able to celebrate their ordination to the priesthood on June 7th here in this Cathedral. I never thought that my prayer would become a reality.

Yet, as a result of God's Providence and the prayers of people, I join David, Kurt and James this morning. For me, it is an experience of grace - not only the grace that sustains my health at this time, but the incredible experience of grace that we celebrate when the Church ordains candidates to priesthood.

The Word of God proclaimed to us this morning gives us an insight into this incredible experience of grace. Kurt, Jim and David can identify with the words of grace that Isaiah spoke. They too can say that the Lord has anointed them, that the Spirit of the Lord God is upon them. With Isaiah they will be sent to announce the Good News, to heal the broken-hearted, to share God's incredible grace and love to all those in need.

St. Paul would tell the Romans that each of us has different gifts which unites us to Christ. This morning, God tells Jim, David and Kurt that they too have special gifts of grace that calls them to serve God's people as priests. We listen to the words of grace that Jesus speaks at the Last Supper. He would tell his disciples then, and Kurt, Dave and Jim this morning, that He consecrates them to the truth which is the incredible story of grace of God's love for the human race.

Yes, this morning we celebrate God's grace and presence among us in the Word of God. But we also celebrate God's grace in our prayer and the actions that take place in this ritual. A few moments ago, Jim, Kurt and Dave were called individually by name. They stood up in the midst of their families and friends and responded that they were present to accept God's gifts of grace to them. In a few moments they will come forward to this sanctuary and they will promise to be stewards of the mysteries of God's grace. They will promise to be conscientious workers who will preach the Gospel worthily and wisely. They will promise to share God's grace in the celebration of the Eucharist and reconciliation. They promise to be people of prayer, and they will promise respect and obedience to whoever serves as Bishop. Yet, Dave, Jim, and Kurt know that what they promise, they cannot do without God's help and our prayer. They will experience God's powerful grace as they prostrate themselves on the sanctuary floor as we call upon the saints of heaven to pray for them and for us.

Kurt, Jim and Dave will rise from the sanctuary floor and I as Bishop will then lay my hands on each of their heads. In doing so, I call upon the Holy Spirit to grace these men with the gift of ordained ministry. All the priests present will do the same and I will then offer the Prayer of Consecration that asks God to grant these men the grace and dignity of the priesthood. They will then receive the signs of their office, the stole and chasuble. I will anoint their hands as a sign of their consecration. Finally, I will take the bread and wine that people bring forth and I will share these gifts with David, Kurt and Jim and I will say:

“Accept from the holy people of God  
the gifts to be offered to him.  
Know what you are doing,  
and imitate the mystery you celebrate:  
model your life on the mystery of the Lord's cross.”

Yes, we celebrate the incredible gift of God's grace this morning. But we would not have this celebration if Kurt, Jim and Dave had not been open to receive God's grace in so many ways throughout their lives. God's grace has been so evident in the gifts of life, love and support that their parents and families have shared with them. And so, to Mrs. Mayovsky as well as to Mr. Mayovsky who is unable to be with us, thank you. To Mrs. Nagel and to your husband who is watching this celebration from eternity, thank you. To Mr. and Mrs. Northrop, thank you. Thank you for your support, your love, your encouragement of your sons.

To the priests and people who have encouraged you, thank you as well. To be present for this celebration of grace reminds all of us of how God's grace touches our lives. To the parish communities who welcomed these men during their years of formation and education, thank you for the grace you have given to these men. To the faculties and staffs of St. John's Seminary, Christ the King Seminary in Mission, B.C., St. Meinrad Seminary, and Mundelein Seminary, thank you for your invaluable assistance and help. To a special group of religious women who join us this morning at my request, I am especially grateful. Thank you to the Carmelites for the ministry of grace you share with us by praying for the priests and people of our local Church. To Father Clay Meyer and Mr. Rich Shively from our own Vocations Office, thank you for the grace that you have been to these men and to so many others who are discerning the call to priesthood.

And finally, allow me to say a word to Dave, Kurt and Jim. You are, you have been, and you will be a grace to me and to this local Church. It has been a grace to watch you over these past four or five years and to see how each of you in your own unique way has responded to God's call. Each of you is a gifted, pastoral and prayerful person with whom it is a privilege for me to share the gift of priesthood.

Dave, what is better than two Father Mayovsky's in Western Washington than three Father Mayovsky's? Dave you bring quiet, powerful and prayerful gifts in the ministry that you will bring to our local Church. Kurt, you bring a gifted mind and creative spirit that has helped you to make the choice of the heart to serve us here in Western Washington - and we are blessed. Jim, you bring the gift of joy and song, hope and promise in who you are and what you do. Each of you has tremendous gifts of grace that will enrich all of us - and we are grateful.

My friends, today is a day to celebrate God's grace. God's grace has prompted these three men to serve us here in this local Church and we are graced because of their gift. May their witness encourage others to do the same. May we support these men as they begin their priestly ministry among us. May they in turn collaborate with and encourage people to use the gifts of all God's people here in the Church in Western Washington.

Last December, I never dreamed I would be here to celebrate this day. But it is amazing what God's grace can do. I give thanks with all of you for the grace that we celebrate today. It is the grace of being able to ordain David Mayovsky, Kurt Nagel and James Northrop to priesthood. May they share their gifts of grace with us for years to come - and we give thanks.