



Homily for Priestly Ordination:
Fathers David Keegan and Philip Timlin

Cathedral Basilica of St. Augustine
May 14, 2016

St. John Paul II once said that “the Holy Spirit is like a wind filling the sails of the great ship of the Church.” Today we celebrate the feast of the 12th Apostle, St. Mathias. As we heard from the Scripture, Mathias was chosen because he had been a disciple and witnessed the Resurrection.

Starting tonight, Fathers David and Philip will be celebrating their first masses for Pentecost Sunday. I pray that everyone participating in this priestly ordination asks the Spirit, with His sanctifying power, to act fully in us for the sake of the Church’s vast mission.

In the rite of ordination to priesthood, we pray:

“Almighty Father, grant, we pray, to these servants of yours the dignity of the priesthood. Renew deep within them the Spirit of holiness... By their manner of life, may they be examples of right conduct. May they be worthy coworkers with the Order of Bishops, so that by their preaching and through the grace of the Holy Spirit, the words of the Gospel may bear fruit in human hearts and reach even to the ends of the earth.”

The “Spirit of holiness,” which the ordaining bishop calls on to renew “deep within” the new two priests, is the same Spirit who continually renews the call to holiness applicable to all Christians. Our baptismal call is a universal call to holiness by the power of the Holy Spirit renewing history, community and our personal lives.

It is all together fitting that “a calendar coincidence,” even better – “Divine Providence,” placed this ordination on the feast of one of the 72 disciples of Jesus who joined the Apostolic College in the 12th position. This underlines that all ministry in the Church and especially priestly ministry, needs to be connected to the Apostles and their successors. For a credible sign of authentic ministry is the bond of affective and effective communion with the bishop in the local Church. A priest, then, serves as a bridge between all the faithful, inspired by the Holy Spirit to live the universal call to holiness, and the bishops for the sake of witnessing Church unity in the Holy Spirit.

Although there are many sections in the entire ritual of the sacrament of holy orders, the essential part is the imposition of hands. In the Acts of the Apostles, this is always related to the activity of the Holy Spirit granting some responsibility to a person for the sake of the global mission.

Accompanying the laying on of hands both by bishops and the Presbyteral order is the consecratory prayer asking the Eternal Father for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit and his gifts to the new priests. Then their hands are consecrated with the Holy Chrism, the special anointing of the Holy Spirit, making their ministry fruitful both visibly and invisibly. Today they receive the paten and the chalice so that they can present “the offering of the holy people of God “as David and Phillip are essentially constituted servants of the Eucharist acting as the Church teaches in persona Christi.

In this Marian month, these two new priests chose to bless their paten and chalice last night at the Shrine of our Lady of La Leche in the context of a holy hour of Eucharistic adoration not far from the historic altar of the Mass celebrated 451 years ago in St. Augustine. Today, they chose to pray the Holy Rosary before this ordination seeking the intercession of the Mother of the Church. David and Philip, your love for the Mother of the Lord gives me a lot of confidence for your priestly life – bound to be

blessed by an entire life of abundant apostolic fruits and blessings as Jesus prayed for his beloved disciples.

A very ancient eastern Eucharistic prayer shows well how the love of Mary is inseparable from the love of Christ:

“You who once spoke to Moses
on Mount Sinai,
Have received from an immaculate Virgin
Flesh that is free from all sin.

You who once pastured Israel,
Now feed on the milk of a Mother
Who has not known man.
O marvelous happening!

You who once punished kings
now save yourself from a king
By flight into Egypt.

You seated in majesty (on a high throne)
Were laid in a manger
Retaining all Your dignity.

And now full of faith,
We praise the Mother and sing to the Son.
To You be the glory.
Veni Creator Spiritu!
Come, Come!”

*Given on May 14, 2016 by
Most Rev. Felipe J. Estévez
Bishop of St. Augustine*