



Capuchin Franciscan Friars

PROVINCE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

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They are one step closer!

In early May, three Capuchin friars were ordained deacons in the crypt church of the Basilica of the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. It was a beautiful and joyous morning.

Bishop Evilio Menjivar-Ayala, auxiliary bishop of Washington, ordained our three friars and two others, another Capuchin friar and a Redemptorist seminarian.

Virtually every living Capuchin priest was ordained a deacon in that crypt church. I vividly recall my own ordination there 45 years ago! That was on a cold January morning ... and I was just a youngster of 26!

As newly ordained deacons, Brothers Luke Kim, Stephen Cantwell and Ryan



Five newly ordained deacons with Bishop Menjivar-Ayala in the crypt church of the Basilica.

Schmeltzer are beginning the last step to being ordained to the priesthood, hopefully next summer. Yes, it's been a long haul for them.

They graduated from the Catholic University of America a week later with a master's degree in theology. Now they will be sent to parishes to assist at Mass, preach homilies, baptize, and officiate at weddings and funerals.

Of course, it all takes money, doesn't it? For these three - their formation and education costs since they were postulants almost ten years ago - will exceed a quarter of a million dollars!

And, yes, we come to you asking for help. Can we count on you to make a contribution to help us pay for the training and schooling of our youngest friars?



Fr. Brian Stacy vests a deacon (above) and Br. Ryan Schmeltzer incenses the Bishop during the Mass of ordination.



Br. Luke Kim (*at right*) is assigned to serve as a deacon at St. John the Evangelist Parish in Philadelphia. This Center City parish will challenge Br. Luke to serve a wide variety of people – young and old, office workers and the unemployed, business owners and beggars. Yes, many people come to the door of the friary for help.

The Catholic community of Indiana, PA, will have a deacon who was born and raised in Philadelphia. Br. Stephen Cantwell (*below right*) will assist Fr. Richard Owens, pastor, and Fr. Jonathan Ulrick, parochial vicar, at St. Bernard of Clairvaux Parish and the University of Indiana parish of St. Thomas More. Br. Stephen will have a lot of experience with young folks, both at the parish school and the university.

Br. Ryan Schmeltzer (*below left with his parents*) is headed to Our Lady of the Mountains Parish in Cumberland, MD. While there are many retired and senior parishioners, there are many families and young folks in the parish. Br. Ryan will, no doubt, get a lot of experience baptizing babies and marrying young couples.

All of the Capuchin friars are thankful for our young men. They bring energy and vitality to our way of life.

We could not possibly prepare all of these young men without you! Your prayers for them, your love for the friars, and your generous support are a blessing for us and for them.

Will you help us train and educate the next generation of Capuchin friars?

If the three new deacons pass muster in their service as deacons, next summer we will rejoice as they are ordained to the priesthood. May God grant it!



As I write to you, the news of the election of a new Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, is still fresh, and I sense excitement and energy among young Catholics. Our newly ordained deacons will be needed to do the great work of Jesus Christ.

I know you want to share in those blessings. Please help us train a new generation of Capuchin priests and brothers.

Sincerely,

Fr. John Pfannenstiel, OFM Cap.

P.S. Your generous gift to the Capuchin friars will help us prepare our young friars to become holy, self-sacrificing priests and brothers in service of the Church.

