

Vigil receives ‘gift and mystery’ of priesthood

(Story courtesy of Today’s Catholic)

SAN ANTONIO – After hearing the Lord’s voice and responding to the call to serve as a priest with joy and generosity, Edwin Balmore Vigil was ordained to the sacred order of priesthood by Archbishop Jose H. Gomez at San Fernando Cathedral the morning of June 2. Concelebrants at the liturgy included about two dozen priests of the archdiocese.

A large contingent was present at the liturgy from Notre Dame Church in Kerrville, the deacon’s home parish.

The rite of ordination began with the election of the candidate. Vigil was called by fellow seminary classmate Deacon Moses of Jesus Pillari, answered “Present,” and made a sign of reverence to the archbishop. After listening to testimony from Father Larry Christian, rector of Assumption Seminary, the archbishop accepted Vigil for ordination, and the assembled people responded with “Thanks be to God” and thunderous applause.

In his homily, Archbishop Gomez said that the just sung responsorial psalm, “Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord,” expressed the feelings of the day. “It is a day of thanksgiving for vocations, for family and for ministry in the archdiocese,” said the archbishop. He explained, “Our priesthood is the priesthood of Jesus Christ. We are instruments of the Lord. Our lives are to be lived for someone else, not for us. It is not a life for the weak or selfish. Priests are called to be collaborators with Christ in the redemption of the world.”

Archbishop Gomez cited the second reading at the Mass, 2 Corinthians 4:1-2, 5-7, and the phrase, “It is not ourselves we preach, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake.” He continued, “Let’s not forget that Jesus is not just another holy man or a great teacher. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the only way to heaven, the only way to salvation.”

Following the homily, Vigil came before the archbishop to declare before the people his intention to be ordained to the priestly office and to manifest his commitment to the service of God and the church.

After answering a series of five questions with the response, “I do,” Vigil then went to Archbishop Gomez and, kneeling before him, placed his joined hand between those of the archbishop. “Do you promise respect and obedience to me and my successors?” the archbishop asked. “I do,” Vigil again responded. Archbishop Gomez replied, “May God who has begun the good work in you bring it to fulfillment.

Then, during the litany of supplication, Vigil prostrated himself before the altar as the litany was sung while members of the congregation knelt. At the conclusion of the litany, the archbishop prayed, “Hear us, we beseech you, Lord our God, and pour out on this servant of yours the blessing of the Holy Spirit and the power of priestly grace, that this man, whom in the sight of your mercy we offer to be consecrated, may be surrounded by your rich and unfailing gifts.”

This was followed by the laying on of hands and prayer of ordination. Vigil again went before Archbishop Gomez and knelt before him. The archbishop placed his hands on Vigil’s head in silence, during which time the faithful prayed silently as well. After the laying on of hands, the priests present, placed their hands on the elect, also silently. The priests then remained alongside Archbishop Gomez until the end of the prayer of ordination.

During the anointing of hands, the archbishop anointed with holy chrism the palms of Vigil as he again knelt before the prelate. Archbishop Gomez said, "May the Lord Jesus Christ, whom the father anointed with the Holy Spirit and power, guard and preserve you, that you may sanctify the Christian people and offer sacrifice to God."

At the investiture, Father Vigil's parents, Jose and Carolia Vigil, along with Father James Tucker, SS, vice rector of Assumption Seminary, assisted the new priest in putting on his stole and chasuble.

Afterwards, the newly ordained Father Vigil knelt before the archbishop and received bread and a chalice containing the wine mixed with water for the celebration of Mass.

"Receive the oblation of the holy people, to be offered to God," said Archbishop Gomez.

"Understand what you do, imitate what you celebrate, and conform your life to the mystery of the Lord's cross."

Finally, the archbishop, as well as the assembled concelebrants, offered Father Vigil the sign of peace.

At the conclusion of the liturgy of the Eucharist, a reception was held at the San Fernando Cathedral Centre.

In a statement in the liturgy program, Father Vigil thanked all those who made the day possible. "I would like to start with my parents, family and friends, and the Archdiocese of San Antonio that contributed in my faith journey," he stated. "This day would not have been possible if it was not for your great zeal and joy for the Catholic faith."