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Pensacola-Tallahassee Edition front page story

Father Nicholas Schumm ordained

'He will serve us well'

By Peggy DeKeyser, Pensacola

Thunderous applause rocked the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart June 3 when Father Nicholas Schumm was presented to the assembly following his ordination to the priesthood.

Father Schumm, a Pensacola native, was ordained by Bishop John H. Ricard, SSJ, after being formally recommended by Msgr. Slade Crawford, diocesan director for vocations, and Msgr. Keith Brennan, rector of St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary in Boynton Beach, where Father Schumm earned a master's degree in theology and completed his formation.

Family, friends and classmates filled the cathedral to overflowing for the Mass, which was concelebrated by the priests of the diocese. Several of Father Schumm's newly ordained seminary classmates also concelebrated. Another classmate, Deacon Gordon Vanzetti from the Diocese of Venice who will be ordained for the military archdiocese in October, served as deacon of the word, while Deacon Santiago Molina served as deacon of the altar. Father Yamil Valazquez, a friend of Father Schumm's from the seminary and a priest of the Diocese of Caguas, Puerto Rico, also concelebrated and assisted him with donning his vestments at the conclusion of the ordination rite.

Father Schumm's parents, Wayne and Valerie Schumm, and sister, Valerie, took places of honor in the first pew, followed by his grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. The Good Shepherd LifeTeen Band came from



Father Nicholas Schumm applauds as he introduces his newly ordained classmates from St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary at the end of Mass. The young priests traveled to Pensacola to participate in their friend's ordination.

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Tallahassee to provide music for the Mass. Father Schumm's uncle, the Rev. Dr. Gerald Schumm Jr., a United Church of Christ minister, proclaimed the first reading. Martha Gaynoe, who was the youth minister at St. Ann Parish in Gulf Breeze where Father Schumm participated in his college days, and who is now the director of young adult ministry for the Archdiocese of Atlanta, proclaimed the second reading.

At the beginning of the ordination rite, Bishop Ricard recalled the example of Pope John Paul II, who was elected pope a month before Father Schumm was born.

"Here was a priest who became pope, and who, no matter how far and wide he traveled, always returned to the source, to prayer, to God the Father, to Jesus and to the Holy Spirit. He set the example for the rest of us. In moments, you will pledge to pray unceasingly for the people of God. For a priest, God and God alone is the source of your power and your authority. Nourish that relationship always in prayer. Let God be your beginning and your end. Only in God will you find your wealth, your happiness, your possession, your strength, your fervor, your resolve.

"This doesn't mean that you'll love others less," Bishop Ricard continued. "On the contrary, placing God in the highest resolve places everything else into proper order and allows you to love all others with an even greater love, without selfish concerns or possessiveness."



Bishop John H. Ricard, SSJ, entrusts the paten and chalice to Father Nicholas Schumm.

The ordination rite began when Bishop Ricard asked the ordained a series of questions, eliciting his pledge to faithfully fulfill the duties of his life as a priest. The young man then lay prostrate on the floor before the altar as the choir intoned the litany of the saints. Then, seated in the cathedra, Bishop Ricard imposed his hands upon Father Schumm's head, conferring the power of the sacrament of holy orders. He anointed Father Schumm's hands with sacred chrism, consecrating them. He also presented him with the chalice and paten, entrusting them to the new priest to worthily celebrate the Eucharist.

Father Schumm then vested and assisted in concelebrating the Mass.

Following Mass, the diocese hosted a reception in the parish hall, during which the guests patiently waited in long lines to kneel before the new priest and receive one of his "first blessings."

"I've walked this faith journey with Nick for 10 years," Msgr. Crawford said. "I'm so happy for him and his family and for the diocese. He has many talents and has been richly blessed by the Holy Spirit. He will serve us well. It will be fascinating to watch as he continues to grow in service to the people of God."

Msgr. Luke Hunt, pastor of St. Ann Parish in Gulf Breeze and vicar general of the diocese, recalled the new priest as a college student in youth activities at the parish.

"I remember Nick when he came to the parish. He was always willing to do whatever needed to be done.

"The thing that was most memorable and encouraging for me was when I'd walk into the chapel and see Nick in prayer in front of the Blessed Sacrament. And if you didn't believe in the real presence of the Lord before, you certainly would when you experienced Nick being in the presence of the Lord, because he so clearly reflected that relationship," Msgr. Hunt said.



The Schumm family prays the responsorial psalm together during the ordination Mass.

Father Schumm has been assigned to serve at St. Mary Parish in Fort Walton Beach as parochial vicar.

Msgr. Michael Cherup, pastor of St. Mary and former director of the diocesan youth office, said, "I got to know Nick when he was active in youth programs. The firm foundation that has already been laid in Nick's life and in his work with youth will be expanded and will grow as he comes to St. Mary's to work with all aspects of parish life."

Father Schumm's hopes for his first year as a priest are simple and solid.

"I want to always continue learning how to be a better priest and how to better serve the people of God," he said.

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