



The Georgia Bulletin

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THE NEWSPAPER OF THE CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA

Rockdale Catholics remember beloved veterans

BY ANDREW NELSON

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CONYERS—A row of white crosses and American flags along the edge of St. Pius X Church property reminded passing drivers and parishioners of the sacrifices of veterans on July 4.

Members of the parish commemorated the contributions of their late family members and friends who served this country by wearing a military uniform. Folks like U.S. Air Force veteran Boyd Grant, U.S. Navy sailor Edward Carlile, World War II WAVE Peggy Goolsby and Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran Stephen Robert Bost.

On Independence Day, before the frivolity of barbeques and

Veterans, Page 18



PHOTO BY LEE DEPKIN

American flags and veterans memorial crosses are set up along Georgia Highway 20 in front of St. Pius X Church, Conyers, on July 4. The project was spearheaded by parishioner Iris Grant, whose husband, Boyd, served in Vietnam.

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'A MINISTRY OF SERVICE'



PHOTO BY MICHAEL ALEXANDER

Holding the flags of their native countries, (l-r) Father Valery Akoh, Father Carlos Cifuentes, Father Roberto Suarez Barbosa and Father Gerardo Ceballos are further testimony to the culturally diverse makeup of the new priests enhancing the vocational ranks within the Archdiocese of Atlanta. Father Akoh hails from Central Africa's Cameroon, Fathers Cifuentes and Suarez Barbosa are natives of Colombia, South America, and Mexico is Father Ceballos' country of origin. Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory ordained them priests on June 25 at the Cathedral of Christ the King, Atlanta.

New Georgia priests hail from around the world

BY NICHOLE GOLDEN

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ATLANTA—The ordination of four new priests for the Archdiocese of Atlanta is a time for rejoicing in an “abun-

dant harvest,” said Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory.

At the rite of ordination June 25 at the Cathedral of Christ the King in Atlanta, Archbishop Gregory said the newly ordained are gifts in

response to the prayers of the people for holy, upright and zealous priests.

“Catholics everywhere have come to understand that this need for more priests cannot simply be a numbers’ game.

Above all, it must be a quality game, and we have a fine harvest today,” said the archbishop in his homily.

The new priests are Father

Priests, Page 2



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Retiring Irish pastor has embodied title of Good Shepherd **PAGE 20**

Alpha encourages college students to wrestle with faith questions **PAGE 22**

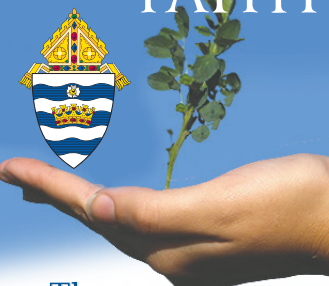
Music, drama paired with prayer, confession in EPIC youth program **PAGE 24**

NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of the Georgia Bulletin will be published on Aug. 4.

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PHOTO BY MICHAEL ALEXANDER

Father Carlos Cifuentes reads from the eucharistic prayer for the first time as a new priest. Father Cifuentes' first assignment is parochial vicar at Prince of Peace Church, Flowery Branch.

PRIESTS

From Page 1

Valery Akoh, Father Gerardo Ceballos, Father Carlos Cifuentes and Father Roberto Suarez Barbosa.

The new priests range in age from 27 to 33 and represent the diverse cultures and communities of faith that enrich the local church. Father Akoh is a native of the Central African country of Cameroon. Father Ceballos is from Mexico, and Father Cifuentes and Father Suarez Barbosa were born and raised in Colombia, South America.

Joining the archbishop and auxiliary bishops, Bishop David P. Talley and Bishop Luis R. Zarama, were Bishop Immanuel Bushu of the Diocese of Buea, Cameroon, and Bishop Hercules Medina Garfias, auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Morelia, Mexico. The visiting bishops

assisted in the investiture of the priests from their home dioceses.

The candidates, dozens of concelebrating priests, and the bishops processed into the sanctuary as worshipers sang "Crown Him With Many Crowns."

Archbishop Gregory expressed gratitude to the families of the young men for forming and preparing them with love. He encouraged them to continue challenging their sons to be worthy laborers in the Lord's vineyard. He advised the candidates to serve as Jesus served.

"Always remember whose vineyard it ultimately is and always respect the disciples that you are sent to serve. Being a priest, or a bishop for that matter, is a ministry of service exercised in the name of the Lord," he told them. "Ours is never a simple function of power or control but always of humble self-surrender and mercy."



Laudato Si'

A sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings.

No puede ser real un sentimiento de íntima unión con los demás seres de la naturaleza si al mismo tiempo en el corazón no hay ternura, compasión y preocupación por los seres humanos.

(Laudato Si' 91)

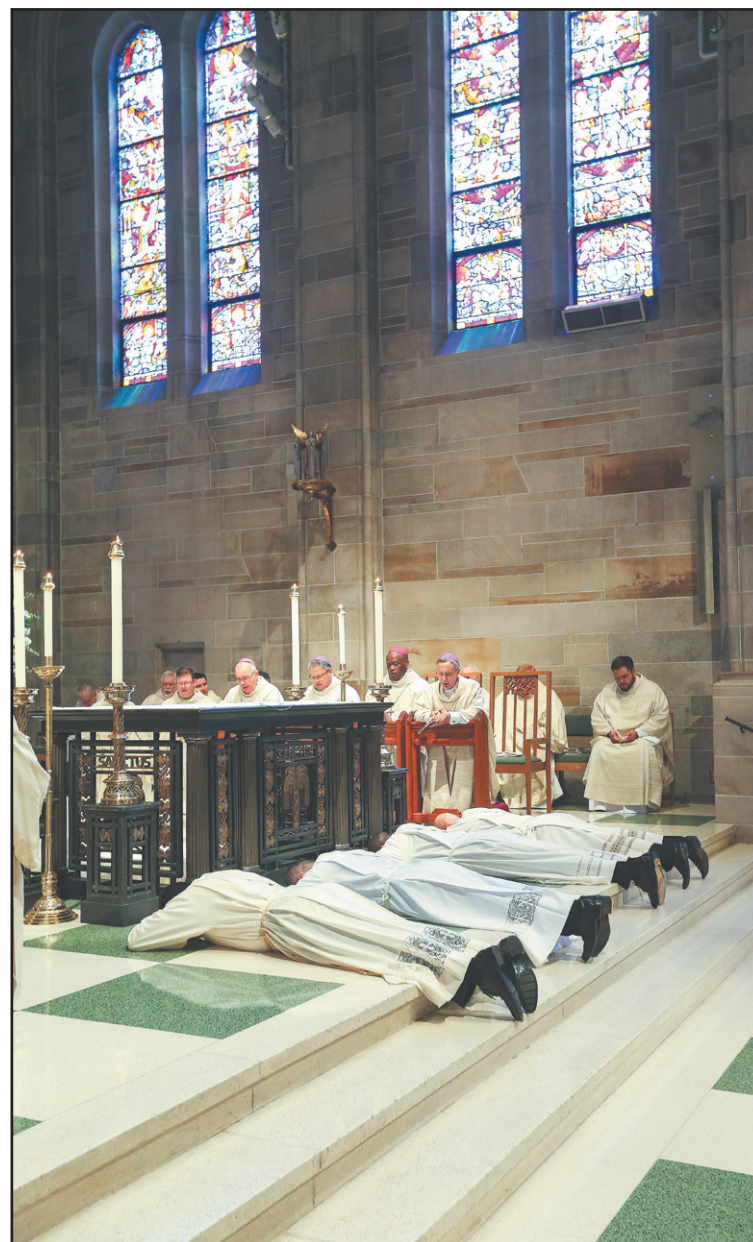


PHOTO BY MICHAEL ALEXANDER

The four ordination candidates to the priesthood prostrate themselves before the altar during the invitation to prayer.

Be merciful judge, not prosecutor

During his homily, Archbishop Gregory provided instruction to the men set to make priestly promises. When celebrating the sacrament of reconciliation, he reminded them always to have in mind their own identity as sinful men who have sought mercy.

“A good confessor is always a merciful judge who warmly welcomes and strengthens those who sin and who seek reconciliation, much like Jesus did repeatedly throughout his ministry,” said Archbishop Gregory. “A confessor in the image of Christ is first and foremost a pastor and never a prosecutor.”

The archbishop provided encouragement about the promise of celibacy already embraced when they became deacons, and about obedience to him and his successors. He focused on the importance of good preaching and urged them to “make Mass the very hallmark” of their lives and pastoral service.

“The hallowed words that you will speak and the actions that you perform did not originate with you. They belong to Christ, and he must always shine through you so that God’s people will see and hear him in you,” said Archbishop Gregory.

The ancient rite of ordination includes promises by the elect of fidelity to the Church and to the duties of priestly office, as well as the promise of obedience to the archbishop and his successors.

The archbishop silently laid hands on each candidate to signify the conferral of the Holy Spirit upon each. Then, all priests came forward and repeated the gesture, one by one placing their hands in silent prayer upon each candidate.

Following a prayer of consecration, the new priests were vested with stoles and chasubles of white with gold embroidery. Friends and family members of the ordained brought gifts of bread and wine



PHOTO BY MICHAEL ALEXANDER

Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory, back to camera, prays with ordination candidates (l-r) Valery Akoh, Roberto Suarez Barbosa, Carlos Cifuentes and Gerardo Ceballos before they walk over to the Cathedral of Christ the King, Atlanta, for the June 25 ordination.

forward, which were then presented by the archbishop to the new priests as signs of their office.

“A huge day, a huge blessing”

During their final year of seminary, the 2016 ordination class

served as transitional deacons, visiting the elderly and homebound, celebrating baptisms, and assisting in a variety of ministries.

Father Akoh, 28, served at both

Priests, Page 4

FATHER GERARDO CEBALLOS

Age: 27

Born: Aug. 18, 1988, in Puruandiro, Michoacan, Mexico.

Family: Son of Raul Ceballos and Lidia Gonzalez; sisters, Rosa, Maria, Xochitl, and brothers, Saul and Israel.

First assignment: To be announced.

Education: Attended the Colegio Jose Maria Morelos, Secundaria Damaso Cardenas in Puruandiro; the high school seminary in Morelia, Michoacan; the Pontifical University of Mexico, in Mexico City; and earned a philosophy degree from the Archdiocesan Seminary of Monterrey, Mexico. At the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio, he studied English and theology and earned a master of divinity degree.

Hobbies: Hiking, traveling and watching movies.

Languages spoken: Spanish, English, and reads and writes in Italian.

How did the year as a transitional deacon help prepare you for the priesthood?: “While in my deacon year in the seminary, I had the opportunity and blessing to be assigned to Holy Name Church, a multiethnic community in downtown Columbus, Ohio. It was a challenge at first because even though the two languages in the community are English and Spanish, the traditions and customs in every ethnic group are very different. This helped me enormously to prepare me for my future ministry in the Archdiocese of Atlanta, where we have the blessing to have such a wonderful diversity of languages, peoples and cultures united in one faith.”



FATHER VALERY AKOH

Age: 28

Born: Aug. 16, 1987, in Small Soppo, Buea, Cameroon.

Family: Son of the late Zachariah Akoh and Hannah Akoh; two brothers and one sister.

First assignment: In the short term, St. Benedict Church, Johns Creek. This fall, Father Akoh will return to St. Mary of the Lake Mundelein Seminary in Chicago to complete a licentiate in sacred theology.

Education: Bishop Rogan Minor Seminary, Small Soppo, for middle and high school education. Spent a year of discernment at St John Mary Vianney Spiritual Center, Bafut, Cameroon. From 2007-2010, studied philosophy at St. Thomas Aquinas Major Seminary in Bambui, Cameroon, receiving a bachelor’s degree in philosophy. Earned a master of divinity degree and a baccalaureate in sacred theology at the University of St. Mary of the Lake Mundelein Seminary in Chicago.

Hobbies: Playing and watching soccer, basketball and ping pong, watching documentaries, learning languages and reading formative books.

Languages spoken: English, Spanish, Banya, Pidgin English and some French.

How did the year as a transitional deacon help prepare you for the priesthood?: “This year as a transitional deacon has been a year of enormous blessings for me. I cannot thank God enough for all the pastoral situations he allowed me to experience that have greatly shaped my identity as his servant. Prior to being ordained as a deacon, I took Philippians 2 as my reference point of the kind of servant I would like to be. With this image in mind, I was able to serve whenever duty called. Immediately after my ordination, I was assigned to St. Catherine of Siena in Kennesaw for the summer of 2015, and during the school year in Chicago I assisted at St. Catherine Laboure in Glenview, Illinois. Preaching during Holy Mass; serving at the sanctuary; visiting the sick and homebound; baptizing and doing funerals are some of the pastoral moments that I had the opportunity to exercise my ministry as a deacon.”



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Photo galleries

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Videos

Four new priests ordained for Atlanta
<http://tinyurl.com/zyoxyxv>

Archbishop Gregory: “The Teachings Of Jesus Are The Same, The Way We Share It Has Changed”
<http://tinyurl.com/he2gdky>

Speakers at the 2016 Eucharistic Congress
<http://tinyurl.com/hocfds6>

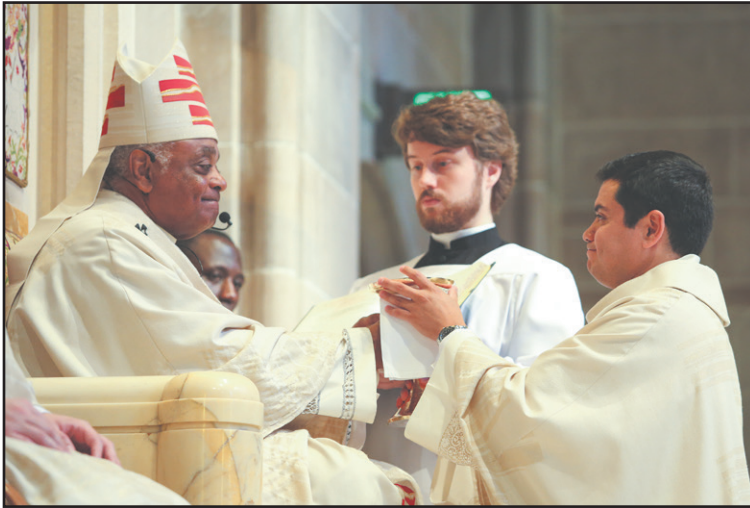


PHOTO BY MICHAEL ALEXANDER

Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory, left, presents the chalice and paten, a sign of the new priest's office, to Father Gerardo Ceballos.

FATHER CARLOS CIFUENTES

Age: 31

Born: June 27, 1985, in Medellin, Colombia.

Family: Son of Jose Cifuentes and Nora Posada.

First assignment: Prince of Peace Church, Flowery Branch.

Education: Licentiate in philosophy, and most recently earned a master of divinity degree in theology from University of St. Mary of the Lake Mundelein Seminary in Chicago. Also studied American Sign Language at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., and spent summers working on ASL with the Disabilities Ministry of the archdiocese.

Hobbies: Reading, spending time with friends, playing soccer and listening to music.

Languages spoken: Spanish, English and American Sign Language.

What has your year as a transitional deacon been like?: "It was a good year. I had the opportunity to celebrate many baptisms and a lot of preaching."



FATHER ROBERTO SUAREZ BARBOSA

Age: 33

Born: July 15, 1982, in Chiquinquirá, Colombia.

Family: Son of Roberto Suarez and Margarita Barbosa; one brother, Miguel Angel, and sisters, Viviana and Leidy Milena.

First assignment: St. Jude the Apostle Church, Sandy Springs.

Education: Minor seminary in Chiquinquirá for high school education. Attended St. Bonaventure Franciscan University in Bogota, Colombia, and completed philosophy degree in the Archdiocesan Seminary of Monterrey in Mexico. Studied English at Pontifical College Josephinum in Ohio and Georgia State University. Studied theology at University of St. Mary of the Lake Mundelein Seminary in Chicago, earning a master of divinity degree.

Hobbies: Traveling, reading, playing guitar and piano, watching movies, dining out and soccer.

Languages spoken: Spanish and English.

What has the year as a transitional deacon been like?: "It was a magnificent experience. I was able to proclaim the Gospel in Mass, administer the sacrament of baptism and bless the love of couples in weddings. Additionally, I was able to serve at the table of the Lord in the Eucharist. Preparing the altar with the gifts of bread and wine, which would become the Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, I became aware that in the Eucharist an exchange happens when people offer not only gifts but also their lives as well to be touched and transformed by the Holy Spirit. Also, I witnessed the power of the Gospel increasing faith, hope and consolation in his people in every situation of their lives."



PHOTO BY MICHAEL ALEXANDER

As his newly ordained brother priests in the background bless and greet others during the reception, Father Valery Akoh gives a blessing to Bibiana Tita, a family friend and fellow Cameroonian from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Delaware.

PRIESTS

From Page 3

St. Catherine of Siena Church in Kennesaw and at a parish in Glenview, Illinois, in the past year.

"Engaging in these ministerial opportunities has helped me realize that being a servant of God is all about selfless service and doing everything for the glory of God and the sanctification of his people," said Father Akoh.

Members of the Cameroonian community wore colorful native dress to the Mass, some featuring images of Father Akoh on their sleeves. They sang and danced joyfully outside the cathedral's Kenny Hall following Mass.

Father Akoh's brother, Musi Ndah, traveled from his home in Delaware for the ordination.

Ndah said his brother has all the qualities one can think of to make a good priest, including being "kind, truly helpful, and gentle."

Becoming a priest has been a dream since childhood for Father Akoh.

"Since he was small, he wanted to do something like this. God always provides it," said Ndah.

For Father Suarez Barbosa, who begins his priesthood at St. Jude the Apostle Church in Sandy Springs, serving as a transitional deacon was a "magnificent experience."

"It was a year full of excitement because the power of the Gospel," said Father Suarez Barbosa.

The priest had more than 20 family members and friends attending the Mass, including his mother, Margarita Barbosa, and grandmother, Maria Leonor, both of Colombia.

"It's a huge day, a huge blessing



PHOTO BY MICHAEL ALEXANDER

Msgr. Joe Corbett, pastor of St. Jude the Apostle Church, Sandy Springs, lays hands upon ordination candidate Roberto Suarez Barbosa during the June 25 rite of ordination to the priesthood. Father Suarez Barbosa's first assignment as parochial vicar will be at St. Jude.

that God has given me," the priest's mother said through a translator.

She added that her son, who wanted to a priest since he was a boy, is fortunate to be serving in the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

Ordination Mass interpreted for deaf

Father Cristobal Villamil was vesting priest Cristobal Villamil was vesting priest Father Suarez Barbosa, whom he has known for many years.

The spiritual mentor spoke about the strengths of the young priest.

“He’s very active. He knows how to talk well with young people. He’s very music-driven,” said Father Villamil.

Lubin and Aura Trivino, parishioners of St. Joseph Church in Marietta, have been second parents to Father Suarez Barbosa during his years in Atlanta. Mrs. Trivino makes home-cooked meals for him.

“We love him so much,” said Lubin Trivino.

Father Cifuentes, who celebrated his 31st birthday two days after being ordained, wanted to make sure members of the deaf Catholic community were included in the ordination Mass. Father Cifuentes learned American Sign Language as a seminarian.

Kathy Daykin, coordinator of deaf services for the archdiocese’s Disabilities Ministry, said he called ahead to make sure ASL interpreters and seating would be available for the deaf.

“We interpreted his diaconate Mass,” said Daykin. “We try to do it because our deaf wouldn’t have the opportunity to witness this.”

Seven deaf Catholics from across the archdiocese attended the Mass to celebrate the ordination of Father Cifuentes, and were assisted by two ASL interpreters.

Daykin said she worked with Father Cifuentes over two summers. He also studied ASL at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., at a month-long program.

“He’s so good at it. He really needs to be immersed in it,” said Daykin.

Father Cifuentes’ first assignment at Prince of Peace Church in Flowery Branch will allow for

“Always remember whose vineyard it ultimately is and always respect the disciples that you are sent to serve. Being a priest, or a bishop for that matter, is a ministry of service exercised in the name of the Lord.”

Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory

that immersion. Prince of Peace is one of several parishes with an active deaf ministry, including ASL interpretation of some Masses.

The new priest is also interested in ministries that involve teaching, including RCIA and preparation for first Communion.

Father Cifuentes said the past year as a deacon was a good preparatory year.

“I had the opportunity to celebrate many baptisms, and a lot of preaching,” he noted.

“I see the light of Christ in him”

Gail Crouch, a parishioner of Transfiguration Church in Marietta, became acquainted with several seminarians volunteering at her parish in recent years.

Watching the newly ordained give blessings to well-wishers at the reception following Mass, Crouch expressed a new hope and confidence in the generation



PHOTO BY MICHAEL ALEXANDER

To suppress any pre-ordination jitters, candidates (l-r) Roberto Suarez Barbosa, Gerardo Ceballos, Valery Akoh and Carlos Cifuentes take a group “selfie” minutes before the liturgical ceremony.

of young men being called to the priesthood.

“I just feel things are going to be better,” said Crouch.

Her involvement in ministries at Transfiguration has given her the chance to get to know Father Ceballos.

“I see the light of Christ in him,” said Crouch. “I think the quality Father Gerardo will bring is joy and peace to people.”

Father Ceballos, 27, believes having served at a multi-ethnic parish in Ohio while completing

studies at the Pontifical College Josephinum is of great benefit.

“This helped me enormously to prepare me for my future ministry in the Archdiocese of Atlanta,” said Father Ceballos.


Father Timothy Hepburn, director of vocations for the archdiocese, thanked the families, bishops and brother priests and deacons for their constant support. He also expressed gratitude for the seminarians and the sacrifices they are already making.

“I hope today that you are

inspired as you see your brothers ordained to the priesthood,” Father Hepburn told them.

“I would like to thank all of you who pray for vocations to support the work. It’s God’s work of raising up vocations in the Church,” he said to all.

In his final blessing, Archbishop Gregory asked for Mary’s intercession to “watch over her newest sons as only a mother can.”



**Congratulations to
 Valery Akoh, Juan Carlos
 Cifuentes and Roberto Suarez
 on your Ordination to the
 Priesthood for the
 Archdiocese of Atlanta.**

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Saint Jude the Apostle
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