



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bishop Ricken will ordain five candidates to the priesthood

GREEN BAY, Wis. (June 28, 2017) – Bishop David L. Ricken of the Catholic Diocese of Green Bay will ordain Deacon Adam Bradley, Deacon Mark Mleziva, Deacon Matthew Rappl, Deacon Jon Thorsen, and Deacon Zachary Weber to the priesthood at a 10 a.m. Rite of Ordination on Saturday, July 1, at St. Mary's Parish in the Town of Ledgeview.

This is the largest group of seminarians to be ordained at one time since 1991. This surge is credited to a growing interest in the Catholic priesthood over the past 10 years and the evangelization efforts of the Green Bay Diocese. The temporary move to St. Mary in Ledgeview from St. Francis Xavier Cathedral is due to the large crowd expected to attend this ordination. The five represent the respective communities of Antigo, Luxemburg, Neenah, Green Bay (formerly of Silver Cliff), and Greenville (formerly of Howards Grove).

Deacon Adam Bradley grew up in Antigo, Wisconsin. Running cross country, waterskiing, and working at his father's funeral home, he graduated in 2007 from Antigo High School. Attending the University of Wisconsin-Parkside for two years, he then transferred to UW-Oshkosh where he became involved with the Newman Center and ultimately decided to enter the seminary. Bradley graduated from Conception Seminary College in Missouri and attended St. Francis de Sales Seminary and Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, earning a Master of Divinity degree. His seminary studies included Spanish immersion, hospital chaplaincy, and diaconal parish ministry. Bishop Ricken plans to assign him to serve at St. Pius X Parish in Appleton, priest celebrant at SS. Peter and Paul in Hortonville, and part-time chaplain at Xavier High School.

Deacon Mark Mleziva grew up in Luxemburg, Wisconsin. He graduated in 2006 from Luxemburg-Casco High School where he played football, basketball, and baseball, percussion in the band, and helped out backstage for plays and musicals. While attending the University of Wisconsin-Madison, he felt called to the priesthood, and after graduating with a degree in Secondary Education-Social Studies, he entered the seminary in 2011. Mleziva began his pre-theology studies at St. Francis de Sales Seminary in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and after two years, he was sent to the Pontifical North American College in Rome, Italy, for his theology studies. He earned a Baccalaureate in Sacred Theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University in 2016, and during the past year, began a Licentiate in Biblical Theology completing one year of the program. He was ordained to the diaconate in September of 2016 at St. Peter's Basilica. Bishop Ricken plans to assign him to serve at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, which also includes the role as part-time chaplain at Roncalli High School.

Deacon Matthew Rappl was born and raised in Neenah, Wisconsin. He graduated in 2009 from St. Mary Catholic High School, where he was active in sports, band, and attained the rank of Eagle Scout. After high school, Rappl attended St. John Vianney College Seminary at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, MN, spending a semester abroad in Rome and earning degrees in both philosophy and Catholic studies. During summers in college he served on staff with Catholic Youth Expeditions in Door County, where he combined his love of the outdoors and youth ministry. Rappl then attended St. Francis de Sales Seminary and Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, earning a Master of Divinity degree. Seminary studies included Spanish immersion in Mexico, hospital chaplaincy in Chicago, and parish internship experiences. He was ordained to the diaconate in May 2016. Bishop Ricken plans to assign him to serve at St.

Raphael the Archangel Parish in Oshkosh, with priest celebrant duties in Omro and Winneconne. He will also serve as part-time chaplain at Lourdes Academy in Oshkosh.

Deacon Jon Thorsen was born in Milwaukee and grew up in Silver Cliff, Wisconsin. A member of the Boy Scouts and enjoying time in the great outdoors, he was homeschooled through high school and received his diploma from St. Joseph Academy in Silver Cliff. After attending the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh and earning a degree in criminal justice, Thorsen volunteered with Catholic Youth Expeditions for a year and then entered the seminary. He studied philosophy at Conception Seminary in Missouri attended Mundelein Seminary in Illinois where he earned his Masters of Divinity. He was ordained a deacon in May of 2016. Bishop Ricken plans to assign him to St. Bernadette and Sacred Heart parishes in Appleton. He will also serve as part-time chaplain at St. Mary Catholic High School in Neenah.

Deacon Zachary Weber grew up in Howards Grove, Wisconsin. He graduated in 2005 from Howards Grove High School, where he played football, baseball, basketball, and ran track. During his sophomore year of college, he had a life-changing encounter with Jesus Christ at the first annual Men of Christ Conference in Milwaukee. Weber graduated from Upper Iowa University with a degree in psychology and then attended St. Meinrad Seminary in Indiana, where he completed his Masters in philosophical studies. After graduation, he attended Mundelein Seminary in Illinois where he earned his Masters of Divinity. Seminary studies included Spanish immersion in Guatemala, pilgrimages to France and the Holy Land, hospital chaplaincy, college missionary evangelization trips, and parish internship experiences. He was ordained to the diaconate in May of 2016. Bishop Ricken plans to assign Zach to St. John the Evangelist in Antigo, SS. Mary and Hyacinth in Antigo, St. Wencel's in Neva, and St. James in Whitelake.

A priest's primary ministry is to act in the person of Christ particularly in the area of shepherding the faithful and celebrating Mass and the sacraments. The educational and spiritual development of priest candidates is possible, in part, through the Seminarian Collection, a special annual fundraising endeavor for the education and formation of local men who are in seminary. For more information about priesthood, visit www.gbdioc.org/vocations/diocesan-priesthood.html.

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Who we are: As friends and followers of Jesus, the Catholic Diocese of Green Bay is devoted to fostering households and communities of discipleship through the mission and ministry of the Catholic Church. We are missionary disciples striving to lead all people to the Kingdom of God. Established in 1868, the diocese is composed of 324,000 Catholics in 16 counties: Brown, Calumet, Door, Florence, Forest, Kewaunee, Langlade, Manitowoc, Marinette, Menominee, Oconto, Outagamie, Shawano, Waupaca, Waushara and Winnebago.

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