

**PRIESTHOOD ORDINATION 2020 REMARKS****FR. JOHN CROZIER AND FR. RAFAL BOROWIEJSKI****BISHOP JOHN O. BARRES****ST. AGNES CATHEDRAL****DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE****JUNE 20, 2020**

**Fr. Rafal Borowiejski and Fr. John Crozier, I want to congratulate you and your families on this day of your Ordination to the Catholic Priesthood. Fr. Rafal, we virtually greet your mother Maria who is in Poland and we remember the soul of your father Adam. Fr. John, we virtually greet your father John in South Carolina. We greet your Aunt Anne, your Aunt Kelly and your Uncle Gerard, and remember the soul of your mother Marion.**

**We congratulate your friends, your pastors and mentors, your brother priests, our auxiliary and retired bishops, your Vocation Director Fr. Sean Magaldi and his predecessors especially Fr. Joseph Fitzgerald who was such a critical part of your formation.**

**We are grateful for the presence of your formators who are with us here today from St. Joseph's Seminary (Dunwoodie): Fr. William Cleary, the Interim-Rector of St. Joseph Seminary, Msgr. Robert Batule, Msgr. Michael Curran, Fr. Charles Caccavale, Fr. Michael Bruno, Fr. Richard Veras, and Fr. Luis Saldana.**

**We are all excited about your first parish assignments and are praying for you.**

**Fr. Rafal will be serving the Church of Our Lady of Victory in Floral Park.**

**Fr. John will be serving the Church of St. Mary's in East Islip.**

**Your Priesthood Ordination today occurs in a unique historical context. You embrace today the change in your ontological identity as a newly ordained Catholic priest against the backdrop of the traumas and deaths of the**

**COVID-19 crisis and the societal upheaval ignited by the killing of George Floyd on a Minneapolis street.**

**Today, we honor the courageous medical personnel and all the people on the front lines, including our priest and deacon brothers who serve as hospital chaplains, who continue to inspire us during this COVID-19 crisis and we remember the souls who have died and their families.**

**Today, we all embrace our call as a Church to be Divine Mercy witnesses to racial justice and harmony, and social justice and change grounded in the sanctity of human life, the non-violence expressed in history by the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Spirit-driven conversion and reform.**

**Far from being removed from this context and these events, Catholic priests – including newly ordained priests -- plunge directly into the Paschal Mystery of the moment - always.**

**Catholic priests are contemplative and missionary instruments of the Divine Mercy of Jesus Christ expressed in the Word of God, the Catholic Mass and all the Sacraments.**

**Catholic priests live and breathe the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy especially in times of crisis.**

**Catholic priests are courageous ambassadors and bridges of peace and justice in the Church and in Society.**

**Fr. Rafal and Fr. John, you have entered an exceptional presbyterate in the Diocese of Rockville Centre. You have the support, prayers and fraternity of brother priests who will generously share wisdom and insight with you and who in turn will be enriched by your unique gifts and living of the Joy of the Gospel.**

**Father Rafal, you are a son of the Catholic Church in Poland – a son of the land which gave us powerful advocates of the sanctity and dignity of human life in the legacy of St. John Paul II, and the gift of the Divine Mercy through the vision of Sister Faustina Kowalska.**

**You are a son of the Church, which raised a living witness to religious freedom in soon-to-be Blessed Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski. The Catholic Church on Long Island and the Catholic Church in Poland have always had a deep and powerful relationship in history, and today, with your ordination, we celebrate this bond and look with hope for the future.**

**Fr. John, you are a son of St. Agnes Cathedral and elementary school, a son of Kellenberg Memorial High School and Marianist formation, and a son of Long Island. It has been a grace as your bishop to see you grow in so many ways – your embrace of our beautiful Hispanic community at St. Hugh of Lincoln during your pastoral year, your investment in every dimension of your formation and your deep study and prayer of the Eucharistic ecclesiology of Fr. Henri De Lubac in your MA paper at St. Joseph’s Seminary.**

**This type of serious study of theology goes hand-in-hand with your immersion in the life of the parish.**

**In 2015, Pope Francis gave a significant video message to an International Theological Congress held at the Pontifical Catholic University of Argentina. He said:**

**“Not infrequently a kind of opposition is constructed between theology and pastoral care, as if they were two opposite, separate realities that have nothing to do with one another. Not infrequently, we identify doctrine with the conservative, the retrograde; and, on the other side, we think that pastoral care is an adaptation, a reduction, and an accommodation, as if they had nothing to do with each other. Thus, we create a false opposition between theology and pastoral care; between the believer’s reflection and the believer’s life; life, then has no space for reflection and reflection finds no space in life. The great fathers of the church, Irenaeus, Augustine, Basil, and Ambrose, to name a few, were great theologians because they were great pastors. One of the contributions of the Second Vatican Council was seeking a way to overcome this divorce of theology and pastoral care, between faith and life. I dare to say that it revolutionized, to some extent, the status of theology – the believer’s way of doing and thinking.”**

**This passage is a great incentive for Catholic priests of all ages and in every season of their priesthood to be actively and vibrantly studying and integrating Catholic theology into their daily, ever-expanding pastoral experience.**

**The true priest pastoral artist is a theological and catechetical teacher who according to their personal gifts and charisms is able to integrate Catholic theology into pastoral conversation, preaching and teaching that uplifts, inspires, challenges and reassures the people we are ministering to every day in our parishes and beyond.**

**Today, we go to Our Lady and all the priest saints in the history of the Church who lived their consecration and mission as priests with complete dedication and zeal as we celebrate the Priesthood Ordinations of Fr. Rafal Borowiejski and Fr. John Crozier.**

**Mary, Mother of the Church, Our Lady of Victory, pray for us!**

**St. John Paul II, pray for us!**

**St. John Vianney, pray for us!**

**Blessed William Chaminade, pray for us!**