

***“Oh Lord, here I am. I come to do your will.”***

***Reflections on the ordination  
of Peter Lê Văn Ngữ***

By DENISE WALLEYN

*Blues skies greeted the hundreds who came to Saint Boniface Cathedral on June 1<sup>st</sup> to witness and participate in the solemn and powerful sacramental celebration of Ordination to the Order of Priesthood of Peter Lê Văn Ngữ. Surrounded by his family from Vietnam and the United States, this humble and joy-filled young man unconditionally surrendered his personal desires to be molded into the likeness of Christ, the Supreme High Priest.*



*Father Peter Lê Văn Ngữ.  
(Photo: Wilgis Agossa)*

Seven years ago, Peter submitted to the call of being transplanted from his home, his family in Vietnam and moved to the fertile soil of the Archdiocese of Saint Boniface where he was cared for and guided by the Holy Spirit through the study of languages and, more importantly, years of prayer and formation at St. Peter's Seminary in London, Ontario. What a joyous entry into the College of the Presbyterate.

Testifying on the worthiness of Deacon Peter, Father Stevan Wlusek, the rector of St. Peter's Seminary, stated that Peter's "missionary zeal, intelligence, collegial spirit and deep desire to serve the people of God" will accompany him on the mission given to him to be a good shepherd in parish life.

The ritual and the associated traditions of an ordination are very rich. The calling forth and election, prostration, laying on of hands, the vesture into liturgical vestments, anointing and presentation of gifts are especially poignant and meaningful. They have the power to transform a man into the representative of Christ on Earth.

Prostration carries the symbolism of the death to self that comes before the candidate's rebirth into priestly service. Prostration is a rare sight that represents the candidate's overwhelming humility before the call to the priesthood. As a parent, this was an especially moving moment for me. I realized that not only was Deacon Peter submitting to the Lord's Will, but that his parents were also offering their son to the Lord.



*A prostrate Peter Lê Văn Ngữ, on the threshold of a new step in his journey of faith.*

*(Photo: Wilgis Agossa)*

The actual Sacrament of Holy Orders is conferred when the bishop places his hands on the candidate's head. This is an ancient biblical gesture beseeching God to empower the candidate by the Holy Spirit and is a sign of the authority that is passed through the ages from the apostles.

Following this, all the priests present do the same. The sense of joy, the presence of the Holy Spirit, the jubilation of this gesture was felt by everyone present at the Cathedral.

Anointing of hands with the Sacred Chrism is a symbol of Christ the High Priest, who has offered the one and unique sacrifice. It goes back to ancient times when priests, prophets and kings were anointed with oil, which symbolized strength, power and authority. Father Peter's hands were anointed for he will anoint people in the sacraments, bless them, lift up the Body and Blood of Christ and raise his hands in the confessional to absolve sins.



*A jubilant Archbishop LeGall warmly welcomes Peter Lê Văn Ngữ into the priesthood.*

*(Photo: Wilgis Agossa)*

The presentation of gifts of the chalice and paten – the cup that holds the blood of Christ and the plate that holds His body at Mass – symbolizes the bishop giving the new priest his tools of the trade. The core of the priest's ministry is to preside at Eucharist. Father Peter then had the privilege and the responsibility to concelebrate the Eucharist with his bishop for the first time. Such joy! Such gratitude!



Truly, this was a most blessed day for the Archdiocese of Saint Boniface being gifted with a new priest, Father Peter Lê Văn Ngữ! This young man has devoted most of the past decade to preparation and formation for this special time of consecration. To hear the call of God, and to respond with generosity is exemplary. His joy and humility radiate the love of Christ.

May we all thank God for this gift and continue to offer support to all our priests and seminarians so that together, we can build the Kingdom of God!

### ***Psalm 40***

*We invite all readers to pray for Father Peter Lê Văn Ngữ's new life as a priest, and to recommit your own life's journey to Christ, by reading and meditating on Psalm 40 (Responsorial Psalm Ps 40:2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10).*

**R. (8a and 9a) Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.**

I have waited, waited for the LORD,  
and he stooped toward me and heard my cry.  
And he put a new song into my mouth,  
a hymn to our God.

**R. Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.**

Sacrifice or offering you wished not,  
but ears open to obedience you gave me.  
Holocausts or sin-offerings you sought not;  
then said I, "Behold I come."

**R. Here I am, Lord; I come to do your will.**

"In the written scroll it is prescribed for me,  
to do your will, O my God, is my delight,  
and your law is within my heart!"

**R. Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.**

I announced your justice in the vast assembly;  
I did not restrain my lips, as you, O LORD, know.

R. Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.