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n these changes, I contend that

little could be considered "instant" about priesthood.

I don't expect people to swoon over my accomplishment. But I pray that critics will be sensitive to the experience of the seminarian as he searches within the church's changing milieu.

Ordination offers no long-term refreshment, but only a place to take a cool drink before continuing onward.

Looking back and ahead

My journey to priesthood links me with history. As a young high-school seminarian, and even now, I find myself wanting what others in earlier centuries possessed — ordination.

Ordination connects me with the past. Soon, I will join in faith with those deceased ministers who aspired to priestly service. I will also join in a particular way the priests in the Diocese of Rochester, to whom I extend my respect and admiration for years of faithful service.

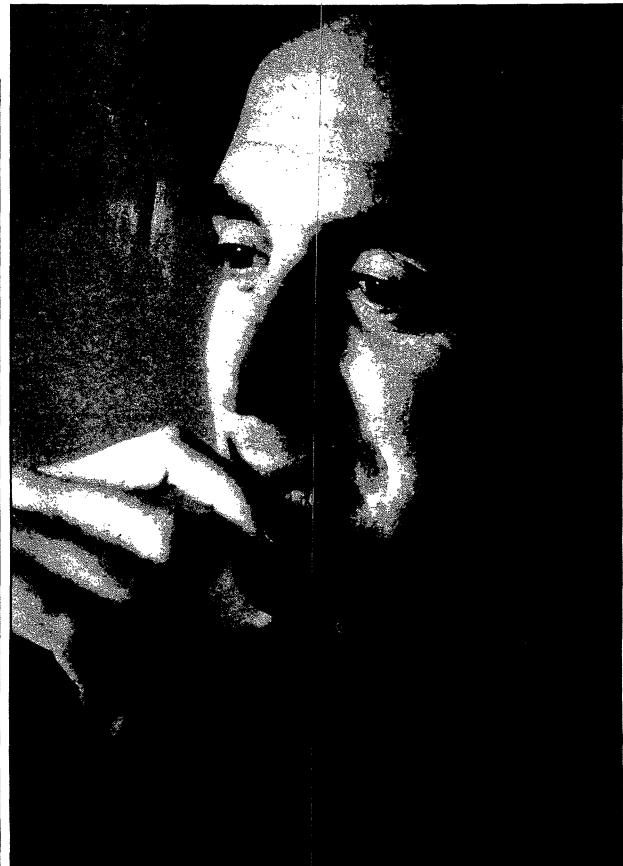
Serving people is what unites us as priests; it is what I am drawn to in the final analysis. Priesthood provides a point of entry into people's lives, and an invitation to people to share my life based upon my public vows.

Priesthood is also a way to share Christ with others in the Eucharist and the other sacraments — a way to become and help others become vessels of the Lord. It is a way to empower Christians to fulfill their own personal vocations.

Though the church is changing at an incredible pace, I intend to continue working with a personal formula. I will strive to learn about my powerlessness, my personal addictions, and my prejudices. I will strive to ask God for the strength to change. Daily, I will attempt to deepen my relationship with Jesus in prayer. In short, I intend through

the grace Jesus gives me, to become the best father for my daughter and the best priest I can be

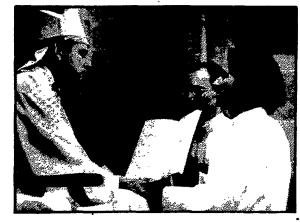
May Jesus continue to bring to perfection in all of us the good work that He has begun.



Bartolotta believes debate and controversy over the ministerial priesthood cannot be resolved unless priests and those unable to fulfill an aspiration to priesthood come to understand one another.

Insight photos by Babette G. Augustin

A note about the author



Bishop Matthew H. Clark ordained Bartolotta a deacon in a ceremony June 2.

Victor Bartolotta Jr., 39, will be ordained to priesthood Saturday, June 30, at Sacred Heart Cathedral. For the past year-and-a-half, he has served as a seminarian intern at St. Pius X Parish in North Chili.

During four years as a community developer at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish, Bartolotta oversaw the conversion of the Mt. Carmel School building into housing for low-income residents. Previously, he was a youth minister at St. Stephen's in Geneva.

Along the way, Bartolotta has earned master's degrees in divinity and theology from St. Bernard's Institute.

