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Father Brewer ordained

New priest 'humbled' by congregation's response

ROCHESTER — Under ordinary circumstances, he greatly would prefer not to be elevated above others. Yet on this day, Father Mark Brewer was the sole focus for a gathering of several hundred joyful people.

"It's real now — I was just ordained. But it's still very humbling," Father Brewer said June 14 outside Sacred Heart Cathedral. "Even though they called me 'Father,' I'm humbled that they saw me as someone they thought should be ordained to the priesthood."

Father Brewer's dad, Jerry, maintains that such modesty is precisely what has endeared Father Brewer to so many.

"Wherever he's gone, everybody has loved him. He's been so good to people and now it's being reflected back to him," the elder Brewer said.

Early in the liturgy, upon being presented for ordination and going through the election rite with Bishop Matthew H. Clark, Father Brewer turned and bowed to the congregation. That touched off a long round of applause that grew louder and ended with all rising to their feet.

"I've been (ordaining priests) for several years, but I don't ever recall an ovation of that magnitude and duration," Bishop Clark remarked.

That was just the beginning: a second ovation broke out toward the end of Mass, followed by another when Father Brewer — having been ordained by Bishop Clark — processed back down the aisle. Finally, as the new priest exited the cathedral and paused on the outdoor steps, many of his fellow priests formed a semicircle and offered one more hearty round of applause.

"It's just very affirming to have all these priests come. I was just amazed that so many came to support me and pray with me," Father Brewer said.

Among those priests were Father James Jaeger, pastor of four churches in Steuben County, including Father Brewer's native St. Ann's Parish in Hornell. The newest diocesan priest has credited Father Jaeger as a key influence in his tran-

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Father Mark Brewer listens as Bishop Matthew H. Clark prays following the Imposition of Hands during the June 14 ordination at Rochester's Sacred Heart Cathedral.

Story by Mike Latona • Photo by Rebecca Gosselin