

God has called them...

By Jennifer L. Willess
of The Catholic Voice

The presbyterate of the Archdiocese of Omaha will grow considerably June 6 when Archbishop Daniel E. Sheehan ordains 12 men to the priesthood.

The 10 a.m. ceremony at St. Cecilia Cathedral, 701 N. 40th St., marks the completion of many years of study and prayer for John Buckson, Randall G. Donner, Thomas M. Fangman, Thomas S. Gall, David M. Korth, Craig J. Loecker, Mark K. Merkel, John L. Pietramale, Douglas P. Scheinost, Charles R. Uhlík, Walter G. Wancewicz and Jeffrey L. Zyla.

Besides adding their gifts and talents to the archdiocese, the new priests will add a page to the history books as well as the largest ordination class in several decades, according to Jim Coyle of the archdiocesan Vocations Office.

John Buckson

It wasn't until he started to study for the priesthood that John Buckson found meaning in life.

"In my previous jobs I used to ask myself, 'Is this the purpose for my life?' I was never able to answer affirmatively. I was looking for a new challenge," he said.

"Priesthood gives my life the purpose and the meaning I needed."

Buckson will celebrate that meaning with Masses of Thanksgiving on June 7, 2 p.m., at St. Gerald's East Church in Ralston, and June 14 1 p.m., at St. Rita Church in Racine, Wis.

The homilist for the June 7 Mass will be Father Damien Zaretz, pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish. Buckson has been assigned to the parish as assistant pastor after ordination.

The homilist for the June 14 Mass will be Father Raul Gomez, head of the Hispanic Studies Department at Sacred Heart School of Theology in Hales Corners, Wis.

The youngest of Victoria and the late Anthony Buckson's four children, Buckson attended St. Rita School, St. Catherine Catholic High School, and the Dominican College in Racine, where he majored in business administration. He completed studies in hotel and restaurant administration at Oklahoma State University in 1970 and worked as an assistant restaurant manager at Ace Foods, Inc. for one and a half years before joining the Brunswick Corporation in Skokie, Ill.

He spent 16 years with Brunswick, first managing bowling alleys and then serving as regional marketing manager for the Northeast Region. He got to know Omaha while managing the Mockingbird Lanes at 96th and L., for seven years.

It was his familiarity with this area and the ability to attend a second-career seminary that led him to study for the priesthood for the Archdiocese of Omaha.

"Throughout my four years of seminary studies I have repeatedly asked myself why I was in the seminary, and does God really want me to be a priest," Buckson said. "And the answer I get is, 'Yes, you have many talents which I hope you use to let others know of my limitless love for them.'"

Randall G. Donner

For Randy Donner, the priesthood is a mix of discipleship and servanthood.

"I believe that the priest's ministry is complementary to the apostolate of the entire Church and that the sacrament of ordination is realized in him only for the benefit of the

Church. Thus a priest is a servant," he said.

"But like all others, a priest is called first as a disciple through baptism."

"I pray God makes me both a faithful disciple and a worthy servant for the Church," Donner said.

He is a native of Bruno, although he has called Norfolk home since his family moved there when he was 6 months old. He is the youngest of Mary Alice and the late Charles Donner's seven children.

Donner graduated from Norfolk High School in 1980. He attended Northeast Technical Community College in Norfolk, Briar Cliff College in Sioux City, Iowa, and Wayne State College in Wayne before enrolling at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to study journalism.

He graduated in 1986 and worked as editor of The Florida Catholic for the Diocese of Palm Beach, Fla., and then as a reporter and photographer for The Catholic Voice in Omaha before entering Kenrick School of Theology in St. Louis in 1988.

He received his master of divinity degree this spring.

His Mass of Thanksgiving is planned for noon on Sunday, June 7, at St. Mary Church in Norfolk. He will be the homilist.

Following the Mass, there will be a public reception at the Norfolk Catholic High School gym.

Donner has been named assistant pastor at St. Isidore Parish in Columbus.

Thomas M. Fangman

As Tom Fangman anticipates ordination, he said he keeps hearing the words the Blessed Mother used at the Annunciation: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my savior, for he has looked with favor upon this lowly servant."

"I believe the 'whole life commitment' involved in diocesan priesthood is truly a gift given by God," he said. "The ordained priesthood allows one to walk with many through all of the thresholds of life."

He said the priesthood has an integral role in God's plan in building the kingdom here on earth and in setting peoples' sights toward life hereafter.

"I believe this is accomplished through living out the Gospel, spreading this Good News, modeling one's life after Christ by loving others, but especially through sharing in the Eucharist as presider," Fangman said. "I cannot imagine anything more fulfilling in life than having the chance to pray with people and grow together with them in faith."

The son of Dr. Thomas and the late Sally Ann Fangman, he has a younger brother, Denny of Yankton, S.D., and sister, Shayla of Omaha.

Fangman attended Christ the King School and Creighton Prep in Omaha. He went on to study communication and personnel administration at the University of Kansas, graduating in 1985. Along with his master of divinity degree he is working on his master's degree in counseling, both at Kenrick School of Theology in St. Louis.

He has planned a Mass of Thanksgiving for 12:20 p.m. on Sunday, June 7, at Christ the King Church in Omaha. The homilist will be Father Vincent Mainelli, pastor of St. Cecilia Cathedral.

He has been named assistant pastor at St. Philip Neri Parish in Omaha.

Thomas S. Gall

Tom Gall credits his parents,

brothers and sisters, and relatives for their support during his years of formation and study. "They made answering God's call a lot easier," he said.

He also thanks God for the call and giving him the strength to respond.

"It is a calling which is filled with many graces, blessings and responsibilities," Gall said. "I feel privileged and at the same time unworthy to be called to this sacred order."

Gall grew up with six sisters and four brothers on a farm northwest of Clarkson. His parents, Stanley and Agnes, still farm there.

He attended St. John Neumann School and then Clarkson High School, graduating in 1984. He studied agricultural engineering at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln for three years before deciding to enter the priesthood.

His studies took him to Mount Saint Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, Md., in 1987. He earned his bachelor's degree in mathematics from Mount Saint Mary's College in 1988, and his master of divinity degree from the seminary in May 1991.

Following the ordination at 1 p.m., there will be a reception for Gall at St. Mary school hall in Omaha.

His Mass of Thanksgiving will be at 2 p.m. on Sunday, June 7, at SS. Cyril and Methodius Church in Clarkson. A reception follows at St. John Neumann school hall.

Gall has been named assistant pastor at St. Joan of Arc Parish in Omaha.

David M. Korth

As ordination nears, David Korth said he has been reflecting on the journey that brought him to the priesthood and he is filled with awe "at the countless blessings and wonderful experiences that fill my recollections."

"I have been blessed by a variety of wonderful people who have contributed to my personal growth and formation as a person and to my near-future role as a spiritual leader of the people of God."

To him, the priesthood means he needs to be a person of God, with a prayer life that allows him to be an effective minister. In addition to being a public leader of worship, a priest is also a "servant of servants," a healing presence in pastoral care and a minister of unity, Korth said.

"My goals include working at being the best preacher I can be, to continue to develop my talents and skills, to accept my weaknesses and limitations, and to remember to laugh and have fun!"

The fun starts after ordination June 6 with a dinner reception and dance at the West Randolph Ballroom. The next day at 2 p.m., he will celebrate a Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Jane Frances de Chantal Church in Randolph. A reception follows in the parish hall.

Raised on a farm near Randolph, Korth is the youngest of Leonard and Margaret Korth's seven children. His father and two of his brothers still farm there.

Korth attended the public schools in Randolph and went to Mount Marty College in Yankton, S.D. for a year before deciding to study for the priesthood. He earned a bachelor's degree in religion from Conception Seminary College in Conception, Mo., and completed his master of divinity degree at St. Paul Seminary School of Divinity of the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minn.

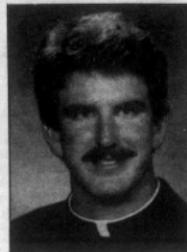
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John Buckson



Randall G. Donner



David M. Korth



Craig J. Loecker



Douglas P. Scheinost



Charles R. Uhlík

Immanuel Medical Center in Omaha.

Korth has been named assistant pastor at St. Leo Parish in Omaha.

Craig J. Loecker

Priesthood is a call to serve God and the Church, according to Craig Loecker. "I pray I always keep this in mind and continue to be a disciple of Christ."

"Preaching and teaching also are two important things required of a priest. I enjoy both of them very much," he said. "I look forward to being a priest in the Omaha Archdiocese."

A native of Harrington, Loecker is the oldest of Merle and Sandra Loecker's six children.

He attended Holy Trinity School and Cedar Catholic High School, and in 1984 entered St. John Vianney Seminary at the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minn. After graduating with a bachelor's in history, he went to Kenrick Seminary in St. Louis where he earned a master of divinity degree.

Loecker will celebrate his Mass of Thanksgiving at noon on Sunday, June 7, at Holy Trinity Church in Harrington. Father Lydell Lape, assistant pastor at St. Wenceslaus in Omaha, will be the homilist.

Loecker has been named assistant pastor at St. Patrick Parish in O'Neill.

Mark Merkel

The seed of Mark Merkel's vocation was sown by his parents, Kenneth and Barbara, who "have always lived their Catholicism to the

best of their abilities. They always attended church daily and said daily prayers."

"These values, in turn, took root in me and my brothers and sisters. I am convinced that the family was the environment which enabled me to hear the initial stirring of my vocation," he said.

Merkel also thanks the people of the Archdiocese of Omaha for their support and prayers for him and the other seminarians.

"I thank you for the generosity you have shown throughout these years in giving to the Annual Seminary Collection for our education," he said. "Without your support, I and the others would not have been able to reach the completion of our studies for the priesthood."

A native of Norfolk, Merkel is the oldest of five children.

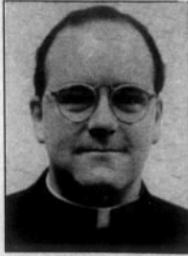
After graduating from Norfolk High School in 1984, he entered St. John Vianney College Seminary in St. Paul, Minn. He earned a bachelor's degree in both philosophy and Latin and in 1988 went on for graduate studies at the North American College in Rome.

In 1991 he earned his bachelor's degree in sacred theology from the Gregorian University and he is currently studying spirituality at the Teresianum Spirituality Institute, also in Rome.

Among the pastoral experiences that he said strengthened his vocation was a summer spent in Nairobi, Kenya, working with the Missionary Sisters of Charity, and a summer in the U.S. Navy's Chaplain Candidate program.

Merkel will celebrate two Masses

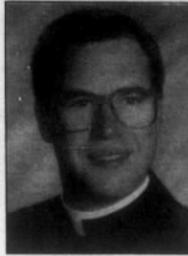
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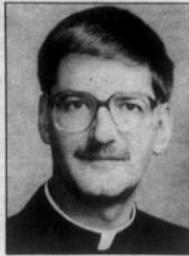
Thomas M. Fangman



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Mark Merkel



John L. Pietramale



Wally Wancewicz



Jeffrey L. Zyla

of Thanksgiving.
The first will be on Sunday, June 7, 2 p.m. at St. Mary Church in Norfolk. The second will be on Sunday, June 14, 10:30 a.m., at St. Rose of Lima Church in Crofton.
Receptions follow both Masses in the respective parish halls.
Merkel has been named assistant pastor at St. Patrick Parish in Fremont.

John L. Pietramale

As a priest, John Pietramale wants to be "a witness to Christ's love and compassion for his people, to be able to affirm and empower God's people to live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ in their daily lives."
The oldest of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Pietramale's five children, he grew up in south Omaha and is a life-long member of St. Joseph Church. Pietramale attended St. Joseph School and Pope Paul VI High School, and said the Franciscan Fathers and Precious Blood Sisters at those schools were instrumental in his vocation.
He studied at St. John Vianney College Seminary in St. Paul, Minn., graduating in 1980 with bachelor's degree in elementary education. Pietramale taught for the next seven years, first at St. Albert School in Council Bluffs, Iowa, and then at St. Robert Bellarmine School in Omaha.
During his teaching years, he attended Creighton University and earned a Christian Leadership Diploma in Religious Education.
Pietramale has also been active at St. Joseph Parish, serving as parish

council president for six years, re-establishing the Legion of Mary, and serving as a member of the liturgy committee, Holy Name Society, St. Vincent de Paul Society, and social committee.
In addition he was the centennial chairperson for St. Joseph and worked with the City of Omaha Planning Department and state officials to have St. Joseph Church declared a National Historic Landmark.
In 1987, Pietramale entered Mundelein Seminary near Chicago. He graduated this spring with master of divinity degree.
He has planned four Masses of Thanksgiving.
The first will be on Sunday, June 7, 2 p.m., at St. Joseph Church in Omaha. He will be the homilist and a reception will follow in the church basement.
The second will be on Tuesday, June 9, 7:30 p.m., at Holy Trinity Church in Hartington. The third will be Wednesday, June 10, 7 p.m., at Holy Family Church in Council Bluffs.
The fourth will be on Sunday, June 14, 12:30 p.m., at St. Robert Bellarmine Church in Omaha.
Pietramale has been named assistant pastor at St. Margaret Mary Parish in Omaha.
Douglas P. Scheinost
The example and encouragement of parents, parish priests and religious women were contributing factors in Douglas Scheinost's vocation.
As he anticipates his ordination, he said he is committed to being a

faithful administrator of the sacraments, cultivating his prayer life, and growing closer in holiness to God and his people in love, mercy and compassion.

The oldest of eight children, Scheinost grew up in Norfolk. His parents, Charles and Nadine, currently reside in O'Neill.

He attended Sacred Heart School in Norfolk and then entered the Columban Seminary in Silver Creek, N.Y., for high school; Oconomowoc, Wis. and St. Paul, Minn., for college; Bristol, R.I., for novitiate; and Milton, Mass., for theology.

Scheinost received his bachelor's in philosophy from the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minn., in 1973, and his master of divinity degree from Weston School of Theology in Cambridge, Mass., in 1976. He had received a mission appointment to Japan, but took a leave of absence from the seminary at the end of 1976.

He worked as a neighborhood volunteer coordinator with United Way in Omaha for a year, and then did parish work at St. Margaret Mary with Father Peter Dunne for a year.

From 1979 to 1989 he lived at the Center of Jesus the Lord in New Orleans where he was active in the liturgy and maintenance of the charismatic retreat house and community. At the same time, he was an office employee for a mechanical and general contractor.

He was accepted as a seminarian candidate by the Archdiocese of Omaha in 1989 and went back to school at Kenrick Seminary in St. Louis. His formation has also included work at the St. Martin de Porres Center in Omaha, St. Philip Neri Parish in Omaha, St. Francis Parish in Neligh and St. Therese Parish in Clearwater, and St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Humphrey.

His Mass of Thanksgiving will be Sunday, June 7, 11 a.m., at St. Patrick Church in O'Neill. Father Peter Dunne will be the homilist.

A reception follows at 2 p.m. in the parish hall.
Scheinost has been named assistant pastor at St. Francis Parish in Humphrey.

Charles R. Uhlik

The skills he attained while at Mundelein Seminary enabled Charles Uhlik to learn, grow and "fall" into a parish setting where he has thrived.

He has been serving at St. Gerald Parish in Ralston and said the people there "have been a building block toward my future ministry and I am excited to be ordained for the Archdiocese of Omaha."

"I hope and pray God will always walk with me and the people I serve here in the greater northeastern Nebraska population," Uhlik said. "Thank you for the opportunity to serve you and to continually grow with you in Jesus Christ."

The son of Delbert and Norma Jean Uhlik, he grew up in Fremont with his sister and five brothers. He attended public elementary and middle schools, and then transferred to Archbishop Bergan Junior and Senior High School when he was in the eighth grade.

After high school Uhlik studied telecommunications at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minn. During that time he completed an internship with Mother Angelica's Eternal Word Television Network in Birmingham, Ala., and worked part-time at as a parish youth coordinator.

He said both of those assignments

were pivotal in his decision to continue his studies for the priesthood. He did that at Mundelein Seminary in Mundelein, Ill.

Uhlik has had experience in the Army Reserves as a Chaplain Candidate and at St. Philip Neri Parish in Omaha. He has been at St. Gerald in Ralston since his deacon ordination last November.

He will celebrate a soon Mass of Thanksgiving on Sunday, June 7, at his home parish, St. Patrick in Fremont. A reception follows at 1:30 p.m. in the Bingo Hall on West Fourth Street.

Uhlik has been named assistant pastor at Holy Ghost Parish in Omaha.

Walter G. Wancewicz

Wally Wancewicz said that since he had entered a high school seminary in 1961, "it is probably safe to say that I have been in formation for the priesthood for over 30 years. These years have provided me with a wealth of education and experience which will serve me well in ordained ministry."

He said that Vatican II reminded people of the priestly character and mission of all baptized Christians.

"By recognizing and affirming the priesthood of the laity, I have come to a deeper and more meaningful understanding and theology of ordained priesthood," he said. "As a priest, I recognize that I am called forth by my bishop from among the people of God in order to become a servant leader to God's people, the Church."

"This life of service must be rooted in prayer and Eucharist."

He will begin that life of service with a Mass of Thanksgiving in his home parish, St. Stanislaus in Omaha, on Sunday, June 7, at 11 a.m. A reception follows.

An Omaha native, Wancewicz is the oldest of four children. His parents, Loretta and Walter, are deceased.

He attended St. Stanislaus School and then St. John Vianney Seminary at Mount Michael. He earned his bachelor's degree from Creighton University in 1969, a *Certificat de Langue Francaise* from the Sorbonne in Paris in 1970, and a master's degree in French in 1973 from Colorado College in Colorado Springs, Colo., in 1973.

His academic credits also include

one unit of clinical pastoral education at St. Elizabeth Hospital in Boston (1984), a master of ministry degree in pastoral counseling from Creighton University (1989) and a master of divinity degree with integrating focus in liturgy from Sacred Heart School of Theology, Hales Corners, Wis. (1992).

On his road to the priesthood, Wancewicz has spent eight years teaching high school French and English in Omaha public schools, eight years teaching religious studies and developing campus ministry programs at Archbishop Ryan and Roncalli High Schools in Omaha, and three years developing and implementing pastoral ministry programs at St. Therese Church in Omaha.

He has also spent two years serving as chaplain on an on-call basis at local hospital addictions recovery centers.

Wancewicz has been named assistant pastor at St. Pius X Parish in Omaha.

Jeffrey L. Zyla

A native of Omaha, Zyla is the son of John and Peg Zyla. He has a brother, Greg, and a sister, Susan Hanrahan.

He attended Holy Cross School and then Creighton Prep for two years. He completed high school at H.A. Burke, graduating in 1971.

Zyla studied secretarial science at the University of Nebraska-Omaha and earned his associate degree in 1976. He worked for Mutual of Omaha and then Northwestern Bell Telephone before entering the University of St. Thomas and St. John Vianney Seminary in St. Paul, Minn., in 1985.

He received his bachelor's degree in history and social studies, secondary education, from St. Thomas and went on to St. Paul Seminary School of Divinity for a major in theology. He received his master of divinity degree last May.

Zyla's Mass of Thanksgiving will be at noon on Sunday, June 7, at St. John Vianney Church in Millard. The homilist will be Father Paul J. Schwaab, pastor.

A reception follows in the parish social hall.

Zyla has been named assistant pastor of St. Michael Parish in South Sioux City.

