

'You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.' – John 8:32

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Three men to be ordained to priesthood

June 18, 2019

Men from three different countries are to be ordained priests for the Worcester Diocese at a special Mass at 10 a.m. Saturday at St. Paul Cathedral.

Deacon Vijaya Sagar Gundiga is to be the first person from India ordained for the diocese. Deacon Alfredo Porras is to be the first Venezuelan – and the first Hispanic who grew up here – to be ordained for the diocese. Deacon Thiago Moises Da Silva is to be the second Brazilian to be ordained a priest for the diocese.

Following the ordination Mass a light reception is being held in the cenacle on the lower level of the cathedral. It is being hosted by the Serra Clubs North and South, with assistance from the Knights of Columbus Council 13575 of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish. All are welcome to attend the Mass and reception.



The ordination can be watched live or later on the diocesan website, worcesterdiocese.org.

Following are brief biographies of the men being ordained. Stories of their journeys to the priesthood are in this or subsequent editions of The Catholic Free Press.

Deacon Vijaya Sagar Gundiga

Deacon Gundiga, son of Joji Gundiga and Innashamma Gundiga, was born Aug. 14, 1988, in Govindapuram, Telangana, India.

He got his bachelor of arts in psychology, journalism and English literature at the University of Bangalore in Bangalore, Karnataka, India, and taught English for a few months.

He joined the Augustinians of the Assumption in Manila, Philippines, where he finished his philosophy studies at St. Camillus College Seminary. The Assumptionists brought him to Worcester, where he did his novitiate year from 2013-2014 and studied theology at Assumption College and St. John Seminary in Brighton.

Desiring to be a diocesan priest, he applied to the Worcester Diocese and continued his theological studies at St. John's, where he got his master of divinity degree.

He was ordained a transitional deacon Dec. 15, 2018, at St. Paul Cathedral.

His parish assignments were at St. George in Worcester and St. Gabriel, the Archangel in Upton.

Mr. Gundiga said his parents were unable to get their visas to come from India for his ordination but he has friends coming from other states in the U.S.

Vesting him at his ordination is Father Dennis Gallagher, provincial of the North American Province of the Augustinians of the Assumption.

The new priest is to celebrate a Mass of Thanksgiving at 10:30 a.m. Sunday at St. Gabriel's, 151 Mendon St., Upton. A public reception follows in the church hall. He has

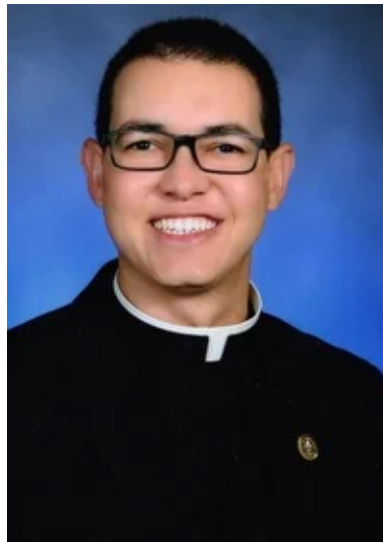


another Mass of Thanksgiving at 11 a.m. June 30 at St. George's, 38 Brattle St., Worcester, with a reception following in the church hall.

He is to celebrate a Mass of Thanksgiving July 11 in his home parish in India, Our Lady of the Presentation. He is to become associate pastor at St. Gabriel's on Aug. 1. [Read more about Deacon Vijaya Sagar Gundiga's journey to priesthood.](#)

Deacon Thiago Moises Da Silva

Deacon Da Silva, son of Paulo dos Santos and Selma Maria Da Silva dos Santos, was born Aug. 31, 1983, in Brazil, in the city of Governador Valadares, in the state of Minas Gerais.



There he started his studies for the priesthood and earned his licentiate in philosophy in 2004 at Vale Do Rio Doce University. He studied theology at Our Lady of the Rosary Seminary in Caratinga, Minas Gerais from 2005-2009, then taught philosophy in public school and was a director in a shelter for poor children.

In 2014, he returned to his home diocese as a seminarian. Father Adriano Lessa, a friend and former classmate serving Brazilians in the Worcester Diocese, introduced him to Bishop McManus and he was invited to discern a vocation here in 2015.

Deacon Da Silva studied English at Clark University and received formation at Holy Name of Jesus House of Studies. He got his bachelor's in sacred theology from St. Mary's Seminary and University in Baltimore in May.

He was ordained a transitional deacon Dec. 15, 2018, at St. Paul Cathedral.

His assignments in the Worcester Diocese were at the following parishes: St. Mary of the Assumption, Milford, where he is to become associate pastor Aug. 1; St. Cecilia, Leominster, and Annunciation, Gardner.

Deacon Da Silva said his parents and two classmates of his who are now priests are

here from Brazil for his ordination. Father Raymond M. Goodwin, former pastor of St. Mary's in Milford, is to vest him.

His Masses of Thanksgiving are as follows:

St. Mary's, 17 Winter St., Milford: 4 p.m. tomorrow in English, 7 p.m. tomorrow in Portuguese for the Brazilians and 9 a.m. Sunday in Portuguese for the community from Portugal.

St. Anna, 199 Lancaster St., Leominster: 6:30 p.m. Sunday in Portuguese.

Holy Family Parish at St. Joseph Church, Worcester: to be scheduled for the Brazilians there.

He has a Mass June 29 in his home parish in Brazil, Immaculate Conception in Fernandes Touririnho, Minas Gerais.

Deacon Alfredo Porras

Deacon Porras, son of Raul Porras and Maria Cristina Suarez de Porras, was born Aug. 22, 1990, in Cabimas, Zulia, Venezuela. His father brought the family here 15 years ago.

Deacon Porras graduated from Holy Name Central Catholic Junior/Senior High School in 2009 and Worcester Polytechnic Institute in 2013, with a bachelor of science in computer engineering and media development.

He attended Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland, and North American College in Rome, where he got his bachelor of sacred theology degree last year. This fall he is to return to Rome to finish his license in sacred theology.

His assignments in the Worcester Diocese were: St. Joseph, Fitchburg; St. Joseph, Auburn; St. George, Worcester; St. John Paul II, Southbridge; St. Mary, Uxbridge; Holy Family of Nazareth and Holy Trinity Chapel, Leominster. He also did ministry in Fatima, Portugal, and in China, in Hong Kong and Jilin.

He was ordained a transitional deacon Sept. 27, 2018, in Rome.

Vesting him Saturday is Father Juan Lucca, an elementary school classmate who is now a priest in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Deacon Porras is to be the third priest in the Porras family and the first in the Suarez family. The other living priest from the family, Cardinal Baltazar Enrique Porras Cardozo, archbishop of Mérida, Venezuela, and apostolic administrator of Caracas, Santiago de Venezuela, is expected to attend the ordination. He is scheduled to celebrate the 8:45 a.m. Spanish Mass at St. Paul Cathedral Sunday. Deacon Porras said many relatives have arrived from various countries for his ordination.

He is to celebrate a Mass of Thanksgiving at 2 p.m. Sunday at Holy Family of Nazareth, 750 Union St., Leominster.

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