

Ordination at the Church of St. John the Baptist in Cedar Rapids, Iowa

On Sunday, October 15, 2012 (Old Style), the Feast Day of the Holy Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Synod, Subdeacon Joshua Vander Plaats was ordained to the Holy Diaconate at the Church of St. John the Baptist in Cedar Rapids, IA. The Ordination was performed by His Grace, Bishop Auxentios of Photike, en route to California after his return from a meeting of the Holy Synod in Greece. His Eminence, Archbishop Chrysostomos, who was in Cedar Rapids for a medical consultation, was in prayerful attendance, though not well enough to serve. Archimandrite Father Akakios and Hierodeacon Father Photii, from the St. Gregory Palamas Monastery in Etna, CA, joined the Bishops in Cedar Rapids to participate in the service. A buffet luncheon in honor of the newly ordained Deacon was held in a local restaurant.

The newly ordained Father Joshua, 35 years of age, is a Probation Officer with the Tippecanoe County, Indiana, Probation Department. He is a graduate of Purdue University and holds a Master's Degree in Orthodox theology from the University of Balamand, in Lebanon. He is married, with two young sons (Michael and Gabriel), and his wife, Diakonissa Charis, is pregnant with their third child.

Father Joshua will be ordained a Presbyter in California at the St. Gregory Palamas Monastery on Tuesday, November 14, 2012 (Old Style), the minor Feast Day of the monastery. He will serve a tiny flock of some three young families in a Chapel—dedicated to the Holy Archangels and quite beautifully designed and adorned in traditional Byzantine style—attached to his family's home in Romney, IN. The small parish will provide another center where our Orthodox resisters, scattered in the American heartland, can avail themselves of the Mysteries. We wish Father Joshua and Daikonissa Charis and their few faithful every blessing in their God-pleasing endeavors. (*See below, following the Ordination, left to right, Diakonissa Charis, Deacon Father Joshua, His Grace, Bishop Auxentios, Archimandrite Father Akakios, and Hierodeacon Father Photii.*)

