NEW ULM – Bishop John M. LeVoir ordained the Diocese of New Ulm’s two newest priests at a special Mass Saturday, June 6 at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New Ulm.

Fathers John Hayes and Shawn Polman were welcomed to the presbyterate by a limited congregation due to social distancing measures because of COVID-19. In-person participation at the ordination ceremony was limited from the cathedral’s standard capacity of 500 to approximately 130, which included families of the newly ordained and a small number of clergy. A video live-stream of the ceremony was offered for those unable to attend.

“This is a joyful day for the Diocese of New Ulm,” Bishop LeVoir told those gathered. “We have two very fine young men who will be ordained to the priesthood today. This is the first time I have ever had a double ordination of priests, so this is something new for me,” the bishop said.

The nearly two-hour Mass included the Rite of Ordination with a Litany of Supplication in which the Church invokes the intercession of the saints and martyrs in heaven to intercede for the candidates and the entire Church, asking God for their grace and mercy.

Following the Gospel reading, Bishop LeVoir initiated the Rite. The diocese’s director of Vocations Fr. Matthew Wiering called and presented the candidates to the bishop as a sign of worthiness for ordination. This was followed by the consent of the people, as the congregation indicated with applause their acceptance of the bishop’s decision to ordain the two candidates.

In his homily, Bishop LeVoir began by saying that the formation of priests begins in families. Thanking the men’s parents Tom and Patty Hayes and Ron and burg Polman, he said, “I am very grateful. These men would not be here today if it were not for you.”

Reflecting on the significance of the theme of the day’s readings – laying down one’s life for Jesus Christ and our brothers and sisters – the bishop encouraged the men to have self-sacrificing love, thinking of others for the sake of Christ above anything else. “We are all called to lay down our lives for Christ and others. That is what the Church is all about,” the bishop said. “We are brought to life by Christ and the Holy Spirit, and we need to be able to shed that blood, that life, for the good of others. That is what we are called to do in our lives.”

Bishop LeVoir’s homily included a strong emphasis and connection between our Baptism and the work of the Church – worshipping, evangelizing, and caring for the poor. He said and we are all called to do this work through our Baptism, “to see our own way, in our vocation, in our own life.”

The newly ordained priests were then vested with a stole and chasuble. Fr. Hayes was vested by retired priest Monsignor John Richter, former rector of the cathedral. Fr. Polman was vested by Fr. Cristian Timmerman, pastor of the Good Teacher Area Faith Community (Cathy, Dawson, Gleihe, St. Leo, and Minneopa). Bishop LeVoir then anointed the men’s hands with sacred chrism in preparation for their sacred duty of presiding at the celebration of the Eucharist.

The ordination concluded with the bishop and clergy welcoming the new priests into the presbyteral order. The Mass concluded with the celebration of the Eucharist.

When asked what it was like to hear his son speak the words of Consecration for the first time at a Mass of Thanksgiving, Bishop LeVoir replied, “When Fr. Shawn spoke the words of Consecration it was really emotional for me, as Fr. Shawn was overcome with emotion, too. What I witnessed on the altar at Consecration on Sunday, was his heart is totally into his calling to be a priest. I am so happy for him as I truly believe it was at that moment he realized his lifelong dream was now a reality.”

With a smile, Father Hayes said, “To hear him speak those words was really emotional for me. This is a life-changing moment for me.”

After blessing the newly ordained priests, Bishop LeVoir invited the men to step forward and greet those in attendance.

The newly ordained priests were then welcomed into the presbyterate by Bishop LeVoir and the clergy as well as chaplains to the Handmaids of the Heart of Jesus in New Ulm.

Following the laying on of hands by the bishop, some of the priests present also lay on their hands on the candidates. Pickled praying over candidates are (l-r) Fr. Matthew Wiering, director of Vocations and Msgr. Douglas Grams, rector of the cathedral and vicar general of diocese.

The newly ordained priests were then welcomed into the presbyterate by Bishop LeVoir and the clergy as well as chaplains to the Handmaids of the Heart of Jesus in New Ulm.

In his homily, Bishop LeVoir began by saying that the formation of priests begins in families. Thanking the men’s parents Tom and Patty Hayes and Ron and burg Polman, he said, “I am very grateful. These men would not be here today if it were not for you.”

Reflecting on the significance of the theme of the day’s readings – laying down one’s life for Jesus Christ and our brothers and sisters – the bishop encouraged the men to have self-sacrificing love, thinking of others for the sake of Christ above anything else. “We are all called to lay down our lives for Christ and others. That is what the Church is all about,” the bishop said. “We are brought to life by Christ and the Holy Spirit, and we need to be able to shed that blood, that life, for the good of others. That is what we are called to do in our lives.”

Bishop LeVoir’s homily included a strong emphasis and connection between our Baptism and the work of the Church – worshipping, evangelizing, and caring for the poor. He said and we are all called to do this work through our Baptism, “to see our own way, in our vocation, in our own life.”

The newly ordained priests were then vested with a stole and chasuble. Fr. Hayes was vested by retired priest Monsignor John Richter, former rector of the cathedral. Fr. Polman was vested by Fr. Cristian Timmerman, pastor of the Good Teacher Area Faith Community (Cathy, Dawson, Gleihe, St. Leo, and Minneopa). Bishop LeVoir then anointed the men’s hands with sacred chrism in preparation for their sacred duty of presiding at the celebration of the Eucharist.

The ordination concluded with the bishop and clergy welcoming the new priests into the presbyteral order. The Mass concluded with the celebration of the Eucharist.

When asked what it was like to hear his son speak the words of Consecration for the first time at a Mass of Thanksgiving, Bishop LeVoir replied, “When Fr. Shawn spoke the words of Consecration it was really emotional for me, as Fr. Shawn was overcome with emotion, too. What I witnessed on the altar at Consecration on Sunday, was his heart is totally into his calling to be a priest. I am so happy for him as I truly believe it was at that moment he realized his lifelong dream was now a reality.”

With a smile, Father Hayes said, “To hear him speak those words was really emotional for me. This is a life-changing moment for me.”

Following the laying on of hands by the bishop, some of the priests present also lay on their hands on the candidates. Pickled praying over candidates are (l-r) Fr. Matthew Wiering, director of Vocations and Msgr. Douglas Grams, rector of the cathedral and vicar general of diocese.