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The most significant experience that I have had as a seminarian has been my ordination to the (transitional) diaconate. The experience was a culmination of seven years of prayer, study and work; but most of all, it was a culmination of the many relationships that have helped form me during my journey towards the priesthood.

Because the ordination was only two days ago, I am still processing everything that happened. However, there is one part of the ordination rite that I found strikingly poignant and beautiful. During the rite, Archbishop Wester of Santa Fe placed the book of the gospels in my hand and said, "Receive the Gospel of Christ, whose herald you now are. Believe what you read, teach what you believe, and practice what you teach."

This moment was a magnificent experience because it highlighted the Gospel of Jesus Christ's transformative nature. Christ has patiently shaped me throughout my seven years in the seminary, and His word has been an effective instrument of his formation. The gospels have consistently been a beacon of hope, joy, and love that have fueled me throughout my time at the seminary.

The experience was also deeply personal because I had the great honor of being ordained by Archbishop Wester, the previous Bishop of Salt Lake City. During the time when he was our bishop, I developed an enormous amount of respect and admiration for him. After the unfortunate passing of my younger brother, Archbishop Wester cleared out his schedule to be there for his burial. His actions were an example of what selfless and sacrificial service looked like. He truly is someone who practices what he preaches.