News

Deacon Scott-Vincent Borba is seen at his transitional diaconate ordination June 21, 2025, at

Deacon Scott-Vincent Borba is seen at his transitional diaconate ordination June 21, 2025, at St. Charles Borromeo Church in Visalia, Calif. He was ordained to the priesthood at the same church May 23, 2026. (OSV News/Diocese of Fresno/Elenore Oliva)

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Ahead of his May 23 priestly ordination for the Diocese of Fresno, California, Deacon Scott-Vincent Borba — co-founder of beauty giant e.l.f. Cosmetics, who left stardom for the seminary — sat down with OSV News to share his thoughts on how he hopes to serve in his ministry.

Borba, who entered the seminary at 42, told OSV News in 2023 he doesn't consider his to be a late vocation.

"God called me at age 10," he said. "I just accepted late."

This interview has been edited for clarity and length.

OSV News: **Your decision to leave a successful cosmetics industry and lifestyle career for the priesthood drew considerable media attention, which has resurged as you're about to be ordained. But the intervening years of your formation at St. Patrick's Seminary have been quiet in terms of coverage. Was that by choice?**

Borba: Right after our last conversation, my spiritual adviser and my pastor at my home parish said, "You're taking a media pause until you're ordained." God created a window (of media disengagement), and you (OSV News) have bookended it, as I'm exiting that window now with you.

The media requests made to my rector were getting out of control, and I was getting anxious. So I brought it to my spiritual adviser and he said, "It's time for you to do a media fast. You need to disconnect. You just need to focus on God. And if God wants this, then he will bless this, and he will bring you back to the opportunity to showcase him and his efforts when he's ready."

So I called my own pastor, and he said, "I agree. You need to take some space between the time now and the time you're ordained."

And that was just literally what happened. Once I was given the OK to go back into the media after the (interview) requests came in, it was like God took his finger and pressed the "go" button.

It's so interesting because I wasn't ready before. And that's where the anxiety came from, because I was still purifying. I was still on this journey; I needed to be in the desert. And I still need to be. I couldn't give myself fully to interviews because I wasn't prepared enough with my theology, with my spiritual life.

Now, because I know his (God's) mercy so well and I'm educated, in my own minimal, low-level way, to communicate his church and his theology and his providence, I'm able to speak with passion because of what he's done with me, and to bring it to light with my new ministry going forward. And so that's the beauty and that's what the fast did for me.

Did that media fast extend beyond interview requests to encompass social media?

As soon as I entered into formation, I knew that media wasn't going to be a good thing for me. And I had a priest recommend that I just get off all media. I took his recommendation as a word from the Holy Spirit, and I literally deleted all my accounts that week. That was seven years ago.

So from that time, I have not had an account. I have allowed everything to be organic. If somebody needs to contact me, I don't mean to send them through hurdles, but they're going to have to try to find me by a different route.

That also helps to clarify if they have the right intention with their article; it helps God to kind of sift out who I'm going to be working with or not, based on his glory and what he wants to do.

I can see God's hand in all of it, every single point of it.

As you enter into your priesthood, how do you think your vocation story will shape your ministry?

This is not for me. I did not reach out for any of this. I just believe that it's a unique story. God has taken such a sinner and broken the vessel, reshaped it and filled it up again with his grace. He is sending me back out, cleaned up, to be able to proclaim his mercy, to proclaim his goodness, to bring people back to repentance — to be that Jonah, who was spit out of Hollywood and thrown on the beaches of Nineveh, and to walk through the city and to proclaim God's mercy and repentance.

I feel like that's what he's doing with me, and he wants me to do it straight out of the gate. I feel like I'm in a greyhound race, where the (mechanical) bunny comes out of the chute, and all the greyhounds are behind me and I'm running as fast as I can. That's what God wants, and I just feel that he's not going to let up.

He was so kind in Eucharistic adoration one day about three years ago. He said to me, "Get some rest, Scott, because once you're ordained you're not going to have any rest."

And I took that to heart. Rest will be with him, in eternal life. Now, I can't wait to get in ministry and be even more exhausted.

Along with celebrating the Eucharist, what particular aspect of your priestly ministry are you most eager to embrace?

From the very beginning, the Lord has given my heart over to the homeless, the poor. He connected me, through the blessings and the graces of the Blessed Virgin Mary, to be able to make my first charitable check out to Mary's Meals (a global hunger relief outreach serving children in some 20 countries).

And when I knew how many children were affected by that donation — that you could feed one child every day for, at that point, less than a dollar — I accepted his grace to lock into my heart that I wanted to be a voice and a servant for him, for the poor.

It was so impactful for me when I saw him within the poor, when I was ministering to the poor, when I was giving food to the poor. I told myself that I want to continue to try to find him in the poor.

I know people think I'm crazy, but I pack my car with little lunches, and I hand them out everywhere I go, in hope that I run into Jesus again. Every single homeless person I meet, I look into their eyes and I ask for their name, and I am looking to see if they're Jesus. And that's exactly what Jesus wants me to do. He wants me to look for him and every single poor person until I find him.

And so that's where my heart really lies, but in terms of my priestly ministry, it's whatever my pastor wants, whatever my bishop wants. But I love the poor.

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When I was in formation, God gave me lots of opportunity to be with the homeless at the Bethlehem Center (a hunger relief outreach of Good Shepherd Parish in Visalia, California). At St. Patrick's, the Missionaries of Charity took me to San Francisco, underneath all of the underpasses and the freeways, where all these little huts are. And that is when I saw the real deal happening.

A brother seminarian that was with me had the grace already to be able to go to the homeless and to embrace them, to cut their hair and not worry if they were involved in drug use or whatever; he just put himself 100% into it. When I saw him do that, it was like God, through him, gave me the grace that I needed to also do that. And so I immediately started.

It changed my life, because it was a whole other level of connectivity with them. I yearn for that in my ministry.

I also love visiting homes for the elderly, because they never receive Masses, they never have enough people visiting them, and they don't receive the sacraments, including the anointing of the sick. It's sad.

I also love hospital ministry. Every time I walk through a hospital, my heart goes to the people that are sitting there alone in the rooms. I keep seeing myself stop into the rooms, blessing them and praying with them, and asking their names, asking how they're doing.

I'm just filled with this love, this compassion for people. I want to get out there and try to quench their thirst for Christ, have them receive the love they need at that moment. I know that I'm going to be contained in a parish, but my love is not going to be just contained in the parish. I feel that restlessness (of love for the poor).