



The Holy See

EPISCOPAL ORDINATION

HOMILY OF POPE FRANCIS

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Video

Beloved brothers and sons, let us reflect attentively on what a lofty ecclesial responsibility to which this brother of ours is promoted.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, sent by the Father to redeem men, sent in turn the Twelve Apostles out to the world, so that, filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, they might proclaim the Gospel to all nations, and gathering them under the one Shepherd, they might sanctify and lead them to salvation.

In order to perpetuate this apostolic ministry from generation to generation, the Twelve joined to themselves collaborators, transmitting to them, with the imposition of hands, the gift of the Spirit received from Christ, which conferred the fullness of the sacrament of Orders. Thus, through the uninterrupted succession of bishops in the living tradition of the Church, this primary ministry has been conserved and the work of the Savior continues to unfold through the ages.

Present in the midst of the bishop surrounded by his presbyters is our Lord Jesus Christ himself, eternal High Priest. In the bishop's ministry, it is in fact, Christ himself who continues to preach the Gospel of salvation and to sanctify believers through the Sacraments of the faith; it is Christ who, in the paternity of the Bishop, enhances with new members his Body which is the Church; it is Christ who, in the wisdom and prudence of the bishop, leads the People of God in their earthly pilgrimage to eternal happiness.

Therefore, receive with joy and gratitude this brother of ours that we bishops, with the imposition of hands, today associate to the Episcopal College. Render to him the honour due to a minister of Christ and dispenser of the mysteries of God, to whom are entrusted the witness of the Gospel and the ministry of the Spirit for sanctification. Recall Jesus' words to the Apostles: "He who hears you hears me, and he who rejects you rejects me, and he who rejects me rejects him who sent me" (Lk 10:16).

As for you, Fabio, beloved brother, chosen by the Lord, may you reflect on having been chosen among men, and for men you have been constituted in the things that pertain to God. You have been chosen from the flock: may vanity, pride and arrogance never come. And you have been constituted for men: may your attitude always be one of service. Do as Jesus did. Episcopate in fact is the name of a service, not of an honour, because it is for the bishop to serve rather than to rule, in keeping with the Master's commandment: "May the greatest among you become the smallest, and he who governs as one who serves". I recommend that you be mindful of Paul's words which we have heard today: watch over yourself and watch over the People of God. This watchfulness means to be vigilant, to be attentive, to protect yourself from so many sins and so many worldly attitudes, and to protect the people of God from the wolves that Paul said would be coming.

Proclaim the Word on every opportune and inopportune occasion; admonish, reproach, exhort with all magnanimity and doctrine. And, through preaching and offerings of Sacrifice for your people, draw from the fullness of the sanctity of Christ the manifold richness of divine grace. And to watch over the people also means to pray, to pray for the people, as Moses did, with your hands held high, that prayer of intercession, that courageous face-to-face prayer with the Lord for the people.

In the Church entrusted to you, be a faithful custodian and dispenser of the mysteries of Christ. Placed by the Father at the head of his family, always follow the example of the Good Shepherd, who knows his sheep, is known by them and does not hesitate to give his life for them.

Love with the love of a father and brother all those entrusted to you by God: first of all the presbyters and deacons, your collaborators in the ministry; but also the poor, the defenseless and all those in need of hospitality and help. Exhort the faithful to cooperate in the apostolic endeavour and listen to them willingly.

Pay close attention to all those who do not belong to Christ's sheepfold; they too have been entrusted to you in the Lord. And pray for them.

Remember that in the Catholic Church, gathered in the bond of charity, you are joined to the College of Bishops and must bear in yourself the solicitude of all the Churches, generously helping those who are in greater need of help. I think this will be easy for you in the role that is entrusted to

you in the Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops.

Watch, watch lovingly over the whole flock, in which the Holy Spirit places you to govern the Church of God. Watch, do not fall asleep, watch, be vigilant, and may the Lord accompany you, may he accompany you in this vigilance that I entrust to you today in the name of the Father, whose image you render present; in the name of Jesus Christ his Son, who constitutes you as teacher, priest and pastor; in the name of the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the Church and by his power sustains us in our weakness.