



The Holy See

HOLY MASS WITH PRIESTLY ORDINATIONS

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

Vatican Basilica

Fourth Sunday of Easter, 26 April 2015

[Multimedia]

Beloved Brothers,

These our sons have been called to the dignity of the Priesthood. It will do us good to reflect a little on the ministry to which they will be elevated in the Church. As you well know, the Lord Jesus is the one and only Great High Priest of the New Testament; but in him, God has made his entire holy people a royal priesthood. All of us! Nevertheless, among his disciples, the Lord Jesus wills to choose certain ones to carry out a priestly office publicly in the Church, in his name and on behalf of mankind, in order that they may continue his personal mission as Teacher, Priest and Shepherd.

As, indeed, for this reason He was sent by the Father, He thus, in his turn, sent into the world first the Apostles, then the Bishops and their successors, to whom he ultimately gave the presbyters as collaborators. Joined with them in the priestly ministry, they are called to the service of the People of God.

They have reflected upon this vocation of theirs, and now come to receive the holy orders of the presbytery. And the bishop takes a risk — he risks! — in choosing them, as the Father risked for each one of us.

Indeed, in being configured to Christ the eternal High Priest, and joined to the priesthood of their Bishop, they will be consecrated as true priests of the New Testament, to preach the Gospel, to shepherd God's people, to preside at worship, and especially to celebrate the Lord's Sacrifice.

For your part, you who are about to be raised to the Order of the Priesthood, consider that in

exercising the ministry of sacred doctrine you will share in the mission of Christ, the one Teacher. Impart to everyone the Word of God which you have received with joy. Diligently read and meditate on the Word of the Lord, that you may believe what you read, teach what you have learned in faith, and practice what you teach.

May this be the nourishment of the People of God; may your homilies not be boring; may your homilies touch the heart of the people because they come from your heart, because what you're telling them is what you carry in your heart. It is in this way that the Word of God is passed on and thus your teaching will be a joy and support to Christ's faithful; the fragrance of your lives will be your testimony, because examples edify, whereas words without examples are empty, mere ideas that never reach the heart and even do harm: they do no good! May you continue the sanctifying work of Christ. Through your ministry, the spiritual sacrifice of the faithful is made perfect for it is united to the sacrifice of Christ, which, through your hands, in the name of the whole of the Church, is offered up in a bloodless way on the altar in the celebration of the Holy Mysteries.

When you celebrate the Mass, understand, therefore, what you do. Do not do it in haste! Imitate what you celebrate — it is not an artificial rite, an artificial ritual — so that, participating in the Mystery of the Lord's death and Resurrection, you may bear the death of Christ in your members and walk with Him in the newness of life.

Through Baptism you gather new faithful into the People of God. Baptism should never be refused to a person who asks for it! Through the Sacrament of Penance you forgive sins in the name of Christ and the Church. And I, in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord and of his Spouse, the Holy Church, ask you all to never tire of being merciful. You are in the confessional to forgive, not to condemn! Imitate the Father who never tires of forgiving. With Chrism oil you will comfort the sick; in celebrating the sacred rites and raising up the prayer of praise and supplication at various hours of the day, you will become the voice of the People of God and of all humanity.

Remembering that you have been chosen from among men and constituted on their behalf to attend to the things of God, exercise the priestly ministry of Christ with joy and genuine love, with the sole intention of pleasing God and not yourselves. It is unseemly when a priest lives for his own pleasure and "struts like a peacock"!

Finally, participating in the mission of Christ, Head and Shepherd, in filial communion with your Bishop, seek to bring the faithful together into one single family — may you be ministers of unity in the Church, in the family — so that you may lead it to God the Father through Christ in the Holy Spirit. Always keep before your eyes the example of the Good Shepherd who came not to be served but to serve, not to rest in his own comforts but to go forth, and who came to find and save those who were lost.

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