



The Holy See

HOLY MASS WITH PRIESTLY ORDINATIONS

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

*Vatican Basilica
Sunday, 12 May 2019*

[Multimedia]

Dearest Brothers and Sisters,

Our sons have been called to the order of priests. It will do us all good to consider carefully the position to which they are to be promoted in the Church. It is true that the Lord Jesus is the High Priest of the New Testament and God has also made his entire people a royal priesthood in Christ. But Jesus Christ also chose some of his followers to carry out publicly in the Church a priestly ministry in his name on behalf of mankind, continuing his personal mission as Teacher, as Priest, as Shepherd.

Indeed, for this reason he was sent by the Father, and he in turn sent into the world the Apostles, and then the Bishops and their successors. Priests are co-workers of the order of Bishops, to whom they are joined in the priestly office and are called to serve the People of God.

After many years of reflection — their own reflection, the reflection of their superiors, of those who have accompanied them on this path —, they have presented themselves today so that I may confer on them the priestly Order.

They are called to be molded into the likeness of Christ, the Supreme and Eternal Priest. By consecration, they will be made true priests of the New Testament, and in this role, sharing in the priesthood of their Bishop, to preach the Gospel, sustain God's people, and preside at rites of

worship, above all the celebration of the Lord's sacrifice, that is, the Eucharist.

My beloved brothers and sons, you are now to be advanced to the order of the presbyterate. You must apply your energies to the duty of teaching in the name of Christ, the chief Teacher. This is not a cultural association; it is not a union. You will participate in Christ's ministry. Share with all mankind the Word of God you received with joy. And for this reason, read and meditate on the Word of the Lord, believe what you read, teach what you believe, and put into practice what you teach. You should never deliver a homily without much prayer, with the Bible in hand. Do not forget this.

Let the doctrine you teach be true nourishment for the People of God: when it comes from the heart and arises from prayer, it will be very fruitful. Let the example of your life attract the followers of Christ: men of prayer, men of sacrifice so that by word and action you may build up the House of God which is the Church. In the same way you must continue the sanctifying work of Christ. The spiritual sacrifice of the faithful will be perfected through your ministry, united to Christ's sacrifice, and through your hands be offered sacramentally on the altar in celebration of the Holy mysteries. Be attentive in the celebration of the Eucharist.

Know what you are doing and imitate the mystery you celebrate. In memory of the Lord's death and Resurrection, carry Christ's death within you and walk with him in the newness of life.

The Lord wished to save us gratuitously. He himself said: "Freely give what you freely received". The celebration of the Eucharist is the culmination of the Lord's gratuitousness. Please do not soil it with petty interests.

When you baptize you will bring new men and women into the People of God. In the Sacrament of Penance, you will forgive sins in the name of God, of Christ and of the Church. And here, I ask you, please, never tire of being merciful. Merciful like the Father, as Jesus was merciful with us, with all of us. With holy oil you will relieve and console the sick. Idle away time visiting the sick and the invalid. You will celebrate the liturgy and offer thanks and praise to God throughout the day, praying not only for the People of God, but for the whole of humanity.

Remember that you are chosen from among mankind and appointed to act in their favour by attending to the things of God. Carry out the work of Christ's ministry with genuine joy and love, with sincerity, seeking only to please God and not yourselves. Priestly joy is found only on this path, in trying to please God who elected us.

Finally conscious of sharing in the work of Christ, the head and Shepherd of the Church, and united with the Bishop and subject to him, seek to bring the faithful together into a unified family. These are the affinities proper to priests: close to God in prayer, close to the bishop who is your father, close to the presbytery, to other priests, as brothers, without excoriating each other

[speaking ill of each other], and close to the People of God. Always keep in mind the example of the Good Shepherd who came not to be served but to serve and to seek out and rescue those who were lost.