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SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

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Sunday 22.04.2018

Holy Mass with Presbyteral Ordinations

At 9.15 today, Fourth Sunday of Easter and 55th World Day of Prayer for Vocations, the Holy Father Francis presided at Holy Mass in the Vatican Basilica, during which he conferred presbyteral ordination to 16 deacons, of whom six are from the *Redemptoris Mater* diocesan college, five from the Pontifical Roman Major Seminary, four from the Family of Disciples, and one from the Opera Don Orione.

The following concelebrated with the Holy Father: H.E. Msgr. Angelo De Donatis, vicar general of His Holiness for the Diocese of Rome; H.E. Msgr. Gianrico Ruzza, secretary general of the Vicariate of Rome; the auxiliary bishops; the superiors of the seminaries involved, and the parish priests of the ordinands.

The homily pronounced by the Holy Father during the Eucharistic celebration is substantially the ritual homily in the Italian edition of the Roman Pontifical for the Ordination of Presbyters, to which he added some further reflections:

Homily of the Holy Father

Dearest brothers,

These our sons are now to be advanced to the Order of Priests. Let us consider carefully the nature of the ministry to which they are about to be raised. It is true that the Lord Jesus is the sole Supreme Priest of the New Testament, but God has made His entire holy people a royal priesthood in Christ. Nevertheless, our great Priest Himself, Jesus Christ, chose certain disciples to carry out publicly in His name, and on behalf of mankind, a priestly office in the Church.

For Christ was sent by the Father, and He in turn sent the Apostles into the world, so that through them and their successors, the Bishops, to whom are given as co-workers the priests, joined to them in the priestly office, and called to the service of the people of God.

After mature deliberation, these our brothers are now to be ordained to the priesthood in the Order of the presbyterate so as to serve Christ the Teacher, Priest, and Shepherd, by whose ministry His body, that is, the Church, is built and grows into the people of God, a holy temple of the Holy Spirit.

In being configured to Christ the eternal High Priest and joined to the priesthood of the bishops, they will be consecrated as true priests of the New Testament, to preach the Gospel, to shepherd God's people, and to celebrate the sacred Liturgy, especially the Lord's sacrifice.

Now, dear sons and brothers, you are to be raised to the Order of the Priesthood. For your part you will exercise the sacred duty of teaching in the name of Christ the Teacher. Impart to everyone the word of God which you have received with joy. Meditating on the law of the Lord, see that you believe what you read, that you teach what you believe, and that you practice what you preach.

In this way, let your doctrine be nourishment for the people of God. Let the holiness of your lives be a delightful fragrance to Christ's faithful, so that by word and example you may build up the house which is God's Church. Likewise you will exercise in Christ the office of sanctifying. For by your ministry the spiritual sacrifice of the faithful will be made perfect, being united to the sacrifice of Christ, which will be offered through your hands in an unbloody way on the altar, in union with the faithful, in the celebration of the sacraments.

Understand, therefore, what you do and imitate what you celebrate. As celebrants of the mystery of the Lord's death and resurrection, strive to put to death whatever in your members is sinful and to walk in newness of life.

You gather others into the people of God through Baptism. You forgive sins in the name of Christ and the Church in the sacrament of Penance. And here I would like to pause to ask you: please, never tire of being merciful. Think of your sins, of your miseries, that Jesus forgives. Be merciful. You will comfort the sick with holy oil and celebrate the sacred rites. When you offer prayers of praise and thanks to God throughout the hours of the day, not only for the people of God but for the world – remember then that you are taken from among men and appointed on their behalf for those things that pertain to God.

Carry out the ministry of Christ the Priest with constant joy and genuine love, attending not to your own concerns but to those of Jesus Christ. Only service to God, for the good of the holy faithful people of God. Finally, participating in the mission of Christ, Head and Shepherd, in filial communion with your Bishop, seek to unite the faithful in a single family to lead them to God the Father by means of Christ in the Holy Spirit. Keep always before your eyes the example of the Good Shepherd Who came not to be served but to serve, and Who came to seek out and save what was lost.
