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Francis ordains eleven new priests: be merciful, very merciful

Vatican City, 17 April 2016 – Today, the fourth Sunday of Easter and the 53rd World Day of Prayer for Vocations, the Holy Father presided at Holy Mass in St. Peter's Basilica, during which he granted priestly ordination to eleven deacons, nine from the Roman diocesan seminaries (the Pontifical Roman Major Seminary, the Almo Collegio Capranica, the diocesan Redemptoris Mater college and the Seminary of Our Lady of Divine Love), and from another two colleges. Cardinal Agostino Vallini, vicar general of His Holiness for the diocese of Rome, concelebrated with the Holy Father, along with Bishop Filippo Iannone, vice regent, the auxiliary bishops of the capital, the superiors of the seminaries concerned and the pastors of the newly ordained priests.

During the liturgy, the Pope pronounced the ritual homily of the Roman Pontifical, but as usual he added some special considerations.

"These sons and brothers of ours have been called to the order of the priesthood ... Indeed, they will be configured to Christ, Supreme and Eternal Priest, or rather they will be consecrated as true priests of the New Testament, and in this role, that unites them in the priesthood with their Bishop, they will be preachers of the Gospel, Pastors of the People of God, and they will preside over acts of worship, especially in the celebration of the Lord's sacrifice", affirmed the Holy Father.

"As for you ... dispense the Word of God to all, that Word that you yourselves have received with joy. Recall your own history, of that gift of the Word that the Lord has given you through your mother, your grandmother – as St. Paul says –, through catechists, and all the Church. ... May your teaching be nourishment for the People of God, and your life and a joy and support to Christ's faithful, so that with the Word and by example – they go together: word and example – you may edify the house of God, the Church".

"Be mindful therefore of what you do. Imitate what you celebrate, so that participating in the mystery of the death and resurrection of the Lord, you bring the death of Christ in your members and walk with Him in a new life. Bring the death of Christ in yourselves, and walk with Christ in a new life. Without the cross you will never find the true Jesus: and a cross without Christ has no meaning".

"By baptism you will add new faithful to the People of God. With the Sacrament of Penance you will absolve sins

in the name of Christ and the Church. And please, in the name of the same Jesus Christ, the Lord, and in the name of the Church, I ask you to be merciful, very merciful. With holy oil you will give relief to the sick. Celebrating the holy rites and raising prayers of praise and supplication at the various hours of the day, you will be the voice of the People of God and of all humanity".

"Be aware that you have been chosen among men. Chosen – do not forget this. Chosen! And the Lord has called you, one by one. Chosen among men and constituted in their service, not in my own service!"

"In filial communion with your Bishop, undertake to unite the faithful in a single family to lead them to God the Father by way of Christ in the Holy Spirit. Always keep before your eyes the example of the Good Shepherd, who did not come to be served, but to serve; to seek and save what was lost".
