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Sunday 12.05.2019

Holy Mass with Presbyteral Ordinations

At 9.15 today, Fourth Sunday of Easter and 56th 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 nineteen deacons, eight of whom were from the *Redemptoris Mater* diocesan college, eight from the Priestly Fraternity of the Sons of the Cross, one from the Pontifical Roman Major Seminary, and two from other colleges.

The following concelebrated with the Holy Father: His Eminence Cardinal Angelo De Donatis, vicar general of His Holiness for the diocese of Rome; His Eminence Cardinal Abril y Castelló Santos, archpriest emeritus of the Papal Basilica of Saint Mary Major; the auxiliary bishops; the superiors of the seminaries involved, and the parish priests of the ordinands.

The homily delivered by the Holy Father during the Eucharistic Celebration is substantially the one used in the Rite for the Ordination of Priests, with some additions.

Homily of the Holy Father

Beloved brothers and sisters: because these our sons, who are your relatives and friends, are now to be advanced to the Order of priests, consider carefully the nature of the rank in the Church to which they are about to be raised.

It is true that 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, he might continue to exercise his office of Teacher, Priest, and Shepherd. Indeed, priests are established co-workers of the Order of Bishops, with whom they are joined in the priestly office and with whom they are called to the service of the people of God.

After mature deliberation and prayer, 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.

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, my dear brothers and sons, 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. This is not a cultural association, it is not a trades union. You will participate in the ministry of Christ. 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 practise what you teach. You can never deliver a homily, a sermon, without much prayer, with the Bible in your hand. Do not forget this.

In this way, let what you teach 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. The Lord wished to save us freely. He Himself said to us, "Freely you have received; freely give". The celebration of the Eucharist is the climax of the gratuitousness of the Lord. Please, do not soil it with petty interests.

You will gather others into the people of God through Baptism, and you will forgive sins in the name of Christ and the Church in the sacrament of Penance. I ask you, please, never tire of being merciful. Merciful like the Father, like Jesus was merciful with us, with all of us. With holy oil you will relieve and console the sick and the elderly. Spend time visiting the sick and the ill. 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, seeking only to please God and not yourselves. Priestly joy is found only on this road, striving to please God Who chose us. Finally, participating in the mission of Christ, Head and Shepherd, in filial communion with the bishop and subject to him, strive to bring the faithful together into one family. This is the closeness proper to the priest: close to God in prayer, close to the bishop who is your father, close to the presbytery, to other priests, as brothers, without "flaying" each other [speaking badly of each other], and close to the People of God. Keep always before your eyes the example of the Good Shepherd, Who came not to be served but to serve and to seek out and save what was lost.
