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30 New Priests

On May 23rd in Rome, Bishop Javier Echevarría ordained thirty new priests for the Prelature. Here is the homily he gave at the Mass along with some photos and a short video of the ceremony.

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Video testimonies from 8 of the new priests (in various languages) along with a complete list of the names of the new priests.

Rome, Basilica of St. Eugene, 23 May
2009

Dear brothers and sisters. Dear
deacons.

1. You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses . . . to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

As recounted in the Acts of the Apostles, with these words Jesus Christ bids farewell to his disciples before ascending into heaven. He tells them that within a few days they will receive the Holy Spirit and he asks them to remain in the Holy City, waiting for the fulfilment of this promise. And indeed ten days later the Paraclete descended upon them in the form of tongues of fire, filling them abundantly with his gifts.

Today these words of our Lord are directed in a special way to the deacons of the Prelature of Opus Dei

who are going to be consecrated as priests. Starting today, conformed to Christ the Head of the Church, they will be able to carry out the priestly ministry: preaching the Word of God with authority, administering the sacraments, above all the sacrament of Penance and the Eucharist, and guiding the Christian people along the paths of eternal life.

In Baptism and later in receiving Confirmation, it is true that all of us have been configured to Christ in order to continue his salvific mission, like instruments in his hands. All of us are called to transmit the good news that he has brought to the earth.

The Holy Spirit has been sent to us so that we may be able to fulfil this mission. Let us prepare to receive him fruitfully everyday and especially next Sunday, the Solemnity of Pentecost. Let us also decide to live

the remaining days of the month of May by staying even closer to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Who can teach us to pray better than Mary, who accompanied the Apostles during the days before Pentecost? Like the Apostles, we too have to regroup close to our Mother, to pray with her and to pray as she prays. Let us be sure to finish this Marian month in the best way possible, by taking special care in praying and contemplating the Holy Rosary and in praying the Regina Coeli.

2. I will now address myself more directly to you, the deacons, who are about to be transformed into priests. I urge you with these words of St. Paul, which I want you to make your own with a sense of responsibility, *that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you*

may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe, according to the working of his great might (Eph. 1:17-20).

The Apostle invites you to consider three points in a special way. In the first place, the hope to which God calls you. This hope is nothing other than the possession of eternal life—and there can be no greater gift than this. By means of priestly ordination our Lord calls you to be holy in a new way, specific to the priestly state, namely through your exercise of the ministry of the word and of the sacraments, while taking particular care of your personal interior life. This is the extraordinary grandeur of your calling.

We have all been invited—as Christ himself says—to be perfect as the

heavenly Father is perfect. St. Josemaría wrote: "There is no second class sanctity: there is either a continuous struggle to be in the grace of God and conformed to Christ our model or we desert these divine battles. Our Lord invites everyone to sanctify himself in his own state. In Opus Dei this passion for sanctity—in spite of our individual errors and miseries—is not changed by the fact that one is a priest or a layperson." [1]

On the other hand, it is undeniable that priests are particularly obliged to be holy. With the words of our Father, I remind you that "the priestly vocation brings with it the need for sanctity. This sanctity is not just any sanctity, a common sanctity, nor is it even an excellent sanctity. It is a matter of heroic sanctity." [2]

Let us pray, therefore, for the new priests. Let us pray a lot for the Holy Father, Benedict XVI, who counts on

the prayers of the faithful. Let us also pray for his Cardinal Vicar and for the Bishops, priests, deacons and seminarians throughout the world. Let us pray that we may never lack well-prepared ministers of God, completely dedicated to the service of souls.

3. The Holy Father, Benedict XVI, with the convocation of the *Year for Priests* on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the death of the Holy Curè of Ars, has wanted to make the Christian people aware of the need for many holy priests. As you know, the *Year for Priests* will begin on June 19 and will continue until June 19, 2010. We are all asked to offer prayers and mortifications for the sanctity of priests during these months.

In an address given during a pastoral visit, Benedict XVI highlighted the most important points in the life of a

priest: "Your faithfulness in the exercise of the ministry and the life of prayer, your search for holiness, your total self-giving to God at the service of your brothers and sisters, as you expend your lives and energy in order to promote justice, fraternity, solidarity and sharing."[3]

The Holy Father went on to say that a priesthood lived in this way, one day after another, "calls forth admiration among the faithful, and is a source of blessings for the community; it is the best way to promote vocations, the most authentic invitation to other young people to respond positively to the Lord's call. It is true collaboration in building the Kingdom of God."[4]

Before finishing I would like to thank the parents and siblings of the new priests, including those who were unable to attend this ceremony. You have all helped to sow the priestly vocation of your sons and brothers.

Be assured that they will keep you very present each day in the celebration of the Sacrifice of the Mass. But on your part do not cease to pray for them, for their fidelity and for the effectiveness of their ministry.

Let us return to the moment of our Lord's Ascension and listen anew to his words. *Go into all the world—he tells us—and preach the gospel to the whole creation ... And they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that attended it (Mk 16:15-20).*

We also want to do so, under the protection of our Lady, Mary Most Holy. Amen.

[1] St. Josemaría, Homily *Priest for Eternity*, 13 April 1973. [2] St. Josemaría (AGP. P01, 1993, p. 172). [3] Benedict XVI, Discourse to Priests in

the Sanctuary of Aparecida, Brasil, 12
May 2007. [4] *Ibid.*

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