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"Offer Them Consolation in Christ's Name"

On November 13, Bishop Javier Echevarría ordained 34 faithful of Opus Dei to the diaconate. They will receive priestly ordination in May. With homily from the Mass and names of those ordained.

2010-11-25

PRELATE'S HOMILY AT ORDINATION
MASS

Rome, Basilica of San Eugenio, 13
November 2010

Dear brothers and sisters,

Dear sons who will be ordained
deacons,

1. Filled with thanksgiving to the Holy Trinity, we are present at the diaconal ordination of these 34 men, faithful of Opus Dei. Among the various liturgical ceremonies of the Church, the administration of Holy Orders—in addition to producing great joy in the Christian people—is a celebration that contains a special beauty, full of symbolism and significance. Through the actions that I will carry out as Bishop, as a living instrument of Jesus Christ Eternal High Priest, the mystery of God will penetrate with greater force and incisiveness in our hearts.

As the Holy Father Benedict XVI has written: “The beauty of the liturgy is

part of this mystery; it is a sublime expression of God's glory and, in a certain sense, a glimpse of heaven on earth.”[1] We ought, then, to participate in this rite with deep piety and with the joy of carrying out an act of worship desired by our Lord.

This is both a very supernatural event, which can only be perceived with the eyes of faith, and also a deeply human one, because we see that the only priesthood, the priesthood of Jesus Christ, continues in time through his ministers.

Through the imposition of hands on the part of the Bishop and the prayers of consecration, God the Father will send forth the Holy Spirit over these brothers of ours. Their ordination as deacons “marks them with an *imprint* (‘character’) which cannot be removed and which configures them to Christ, who made

himself the ‘deacon’ or servant of all.”[2] Let us ask the Holy Trinity that during this Eucharistic celebration the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity may grow in us.

At the same time, let us realize that not only the new deacons, but also all of us, as Christians, have received the mission to serve others, following the example of the Master, who *did not come to be served, but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many* (Mt 20:28).

Today, taking advantage of the graces God is sending us, let us pray that this mission entrusted to the Church—in a particular way to the deacons, as the first reading of the Mass reminds us, referring to the Levites instituted by Moses for the service of the high priest Aaron—may shine forth in the world with all its splendor and its great efficacy.

It corresponds to deacons, according to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, “to assist the bishop and priests in the celebration of the divine mysteries, above all the Eucharist, in the distribution of Holy Communion, in assisting at and blessing marriages, in the proclamation of the Gospel and preaching, in presiding over funerals, and in dedicating themselves to the various ministries of charity.”[3]

Let us beseech the Holy Spirit that the power he will grant these new ministers, through their configuration with the beloved Son of the Father, may reach the souls they will be called to assist on the path to holiness.

2. You will serve God, my deacon sons, by taking loving care of all that refers to divine worship. Already in the past, as Christians who have

received in Baptism a participation in the priesthood of Christ, you have striven to put care and refinement into all the manifestations of Eucharistic piety: participating in the Holy Mass aware of the mystery that is made present on the altar; making genuflections with love before the Blessed Sacrament; and so many other external signs of piety, which reveal the sincerity of our faith in the Eucharistic presence of our Lord.

Now, as deacons, your physical and spiritual closeness to Jesus in the Eucharist will be even greater. You will have the privilege of touching with your hands and distributing the Sacred Species to the faithful, which hide and at the same time manifest the presence of the Body and Blood of Christ; you will take in your hands the monstrance to impart the Eucharistic benediction; you will be able to bring Communion to the sick and Viaticum to the dying,

comforting them on their voyage towards their eternal home....

You will carry out these pastoral services in the best way possible, if you strive to conduct yourselves as did St. Josemaria: in his life and his books we all have—clerics and laypeople—a doctrine in marvelous accord with the Church's tradition, and an example that we ought to imitate in order to grow in love and intimacy with Jesus Christ.

During this year, the 80th anniversary of the commencement of the apostolates of Opus Dei with women (following God's will), and which since last February 14 we have been travelling in the company of Holy Mary, there often comes to my mind the memory of St. Josemaria's devotion towards an image of our Lady that was quite popular during his childhood, when St. Pius X gave a strong impulse to the practice of

frequent communion. “It represented Mary adoring the sacred host. Today, as in those days and as always, our Lady teaches us to come to Jesus, to recognize him and to find him in all the different situations of our day. And nowhere is she more a teacher than in the supreme moment of the holy sacrifice of the Mass, where time blends with eternity.”[4]

In the school of Mary—*the woman of the Eucharist*, as John Paul II called her—we will learn to show Jesus, her Son and our Brother, the refined manifestations of true love for the Sacred Eucharist that he expects of us.

3. With respect to your service to other men and women, besides preaching the Word of God and the administration of several sacraments, I would like to consider especially the works of mercy, which were among the first manifestations

of the diaconate office in the Church. It is well-known how, in the earliest times, the Paraclete inspired the need to elect seven men of good standing, filled with the Holy Spirit and wisdom, to help the Apostles in the fulfillment of their mission.[5]

Among the functions that were entrusted to them, the Scriptures indicate especially the care for the neediest persons in the Church: the poor, widows, and orphans. “As the years went by and the Church spread further afield, the exercise of charity became established as one of her essential activities, along with the administration of the sacraments and the proclamation of the word: love for widows and orphans, prisoners, and the sick and needy of every kind, is as essential to her as the ministry of the sacraments.”[6] To such an extent was this true that Christians were known among the pagans, above all, for their heroic exercise of

charity. “See how they love one another,” they said, upon seeing how our predecessors in the faith put into practice the new commandment of fraternal love, which Christ had taught them.[7]

Today, in many places, the state and other social institutions, but above all the Church, take charge of serving the poor, the sick, orphans, etc. Nevertheless, it will always be necessary to take loving and refined care of the destitute, of which only a heart filled with Christ’s charity is capable.

As in the earliest times, with a complete disinterestedness and lively charity, the Church offers her care to all sorts of persons. This dedication acts as a magnet, attracting the hearts of many who are far from God and whom we wish to draw close to Him. I insist: these charitable services are the task of all Christians,

although the Church entrusts them particularly to deacons. But each one of us ought to be available to alleviate the needs of the others, which many times are not only material but also spiritual. Distance from God, loneliness, indifference, and so many other needs frequent in a society that fosters selfishness, offer us many opportunities to do good.

My children, have a special concern for the sick and for all those who suffer in body and in spirit; strive to get close to them in order to offer them a bit of consolation in Christ's name. With words of Benedict XVI during his recent trip to Santiago de Compostela, I remind you that "for those disciples who seek to follow and imitate Christ, service of neighbor is no mere option but an essential part of their being. It is a service that is not measured by worldly standards of what is

immediate, material or apparent, but one that makes present the love of God to all in every way and bears witness to him even in the simplest of actions.”[8]

4. In closing, I address myself to the parents, siblings, and friends of those about to be ordained. I rejoice with you for this sign of predilection that God has shown to your loved ones; at the same time, I remind you that you ought—we all ought—to pray for them and for all the candidates to the priesthood. Let us also pray for the Pope, for the Cardinal Vicar of Rome, for all the bishops and priests of the Church, so that we be worthy of the grace that God has entrusted to us for the good of humanity.

And let us not forget our loving duty to beseech the Blessed Trinity to send seminarians to all the dioceses—men determined to carry the joy and peace of heaven to the furthest

corners of the world. We do so entrusting ourselves to the intercession of the Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, St. Josemaria and all the saints, during this month when the Church honors them with special remembrance. Amen.

The new deacons, who come from 15 different countries, are:

- Paolo Calzona (Italy)
- Isidro Miguel Fontenla (Spain)
- Enrique Alonso de Velasco (Holland)
- Benito Agustín Calahorra (Spain)
- Alfonso Romero Corral (Spain)
- Francisco Martín Vivas (Spain)
- Gonzalo Otero (Spain)

- José Manuel Giménez Amaya (Spain)
- José Manuel de Lasala (Spain)
- Alberto Barbés (Spain)
- Vicente Guzmán (Spain)
- Ferran Canet (Spain)
- Piero Vavassori (Italy)
- Manuel José Martínez (Spain)
- Damien Peter Lim Guan Heng (Singapore)
- Pablo Mones Cazón (Argentina)
- Francisco Javier Insa (Spain)
- Juan López Agúndez (Spain)
- Alejandro Macía Nieto (Colombia)
- Anthony Kenechukwu Odoh (Nigeria)

- John Richard Grieco (U.S.)
- Thierry Sol (France)
- Robert Weber (Austria)
- Josepmaria Quintana (Spain)
- Francisco Contreras Chicote (Spain)
- Fabiano Dourado Guedes (Brazil)
- Juan Pablo Lira (Mexico)
- Juan Manuel Carranza (Argentina)
- Christian Mendoza Ovando
(Mexico)
- Federico Guillermo Ruiz López (El
Salvador)
- Michał Twarkowski (Poland)
- Lucas Buch (Spain)
- Joseph Thomas (U.S.)
- Ivan Kanyike Mukalazi (Uganda)

Footnotes: [1] Benedict XVI,
Apostolic Exhortation, *Sacramentum
Caritatis*, 22 February 2007, no. 35.

[2] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*,
no. 1570.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] St. Josemaria, *Christ is Passing By*,
no. 94.

[5] Cf. *Acts* 6:1-6.

[6] Benedict XVI, Encyclical *Deus
Caritas Est*, 25 December 2005, no. 22.

[7] Cf. Tertullian, *Apologetics* 39.

[8] Benedict XVI, Homily in the
Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela,
6 November 2010.

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