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Video Summary of Priestly Ordinations: "Transformed by the gift of God"

Rome, May 24, 2025. The English Cardinal Arthur Roche, Prefect of the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, conferred priestly ordination on 20 deacons of the Prelature of Opus Dei from 11 countries. The ordination took place this morning in the Basilica of St. Eugene in Rome, where family and friends of the new priests were able to accompany them with prayer and affection.

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Pdf: Cardinal Roche's Ordination
Homily

In his homily, Cardinal Roche said that “the Church is now calling you to be priests to serve God’s holy people.” And he added: “discover and develop every day the greatness of this treasure that He gives you to care for his people wherever your mission as priests may be.”

Addressing the ordinands, the English cardinal stressed: “Every day will be for you an opportunity to make a new discovery and, in the words of St. Peter, to bear witness to everything that Jesus did in the countryside and in the city “to testify that he is the one ordained by God . . . To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes

in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name” (Acts 10:43).”

Watch the video of the ceremony at this link

He also advised the new priests, “Carry out with joy and sincere charity the priestly work of Christ, with the sole purpose of pleasing God and not yourselves.”

The Cardinal concluded by expressing the wish that “by participating in the mission of Christ, in filial communion with your Prelate and with the local bishops, you will strive to unite the faithful in a single family, to lead them to God the Father.”

Msgr. Fernando Ocariz: “Closely united with Leo XIV, let us pray for the gift of peace”

At the end of the ceremony, the Prelate of Opus Dei, Msgr. Fernando

Ocariz, expressed his gratitude to Cardinal Roche and his affection for the new priests and their families. Addressing the parents of the new priests, he gave thanks for “the great joy of the ordinations” and called for unity with Pope Leo XIV, asking them to pray very much for the gift of peace.

The new priests, who come from 11 countries, are:

- Vincenzo Affinita (Italy)
- Stefano Baravelli (Italy)
- John Robert Bickford (United States)
- Daniel Callejo Goena (Spain)
- Ramón Díaz Perfecto (Hungary)
- Arturo Escamilla Contreras (Australia)
- Santiago Fabregat Trueba (Mexico)
- Ramón Fernández Aparicio (Spain)
- Luis García-Menacho Ariz (Spain)
- José María López-Barajas (Austria)
- Jose Miguel Marasigan (Philippines)

- Robert Alvin Marsland (United States)
- Ezequiel Mercau (Ireland)
- Álvaro Orejana Martín (Spain)
- Pedro Perkins (Argentina)
- Santiago Populín Such (Argentina)
- Enrique Sañoso Vela (Spain)
- Antonio Santos García (Spain)
- Gonzalo Silió Pardo (Spain)
- Cristóbal Vargas Balcells (Chile)

Some stories of the new priests

After finishing high school in Mexico, Arturo Escamilla crossed the ocean to live in Australia. For over a decade, he directed Warrane College, a university residence in Sydney, where he accompanied hundreds of young people. “With God’s grace, in a few days I’ll be able to make Christ present in the Mass and in the sacrament of penance for future generations of young people,” he says joyfully.

Vincenzo Affinita was born in Rome in 1996. While completing a doctoral thesis on Dante Alighieri and the *Divine Comedy*, he is preparing intensely for the priesthood. “As the ordination approaches, my gratitude grows, and I try to place everything in God’s hands.” In addition to philosophy, his interests range from martial arts and chess to Irish music.

Also from Italy, Stefano Baravelli has lived in several cities (Milan, Verona, Rome and Bari) and worked for years in a business association. Looking back, he reflects: “I’ve been fortunate to meet many exemplary priests who have dedicated their lives to serving God and others. Now that God is asking me to be an instrument for drawing many people closer to the faith, I’d like to follow in their footsteps.”

From Rosario, Argentina) to Dublin, Ireland), Ezequiel Mercau has

followed a unique path: university professor, specialist in the Falklands conflict, and now a researcher on the history of Catholicism in 20th-century Ireland. In his life, he has observed that “many people feel far from God, but many also suffer and carry wounds that only God can truly heal with his mercy, forgiveness, and fatherly love.”

An engineer and double bassist, Enrique Sañoso has lived in cities as diverse as Barcelona, Rome, Madrid, and his hometown, Campo de Criptana. “Over the course of my life, the Lord has given me the gift of breathing in a wide variety of environments and sensibilities. Perhaps that’s why I see how important it is for today’s priests to embody the heart and sentiments of Christ in every corner of contemporary reality.” With a smile, he adds, “It’s a real challenge — and I ask for your prayers.”

A physicist by training, Robert Marsland discovered Opus Dei while studying at Princeton University (New Jersey), and later earned his PhD at MIT. Looking back on those years, he recalls: “I used to help my colleagues discover God through rigorous study of creation. Now I’ll strive to continue that mission, but in a different setting, through the Word of God.”

A journalist by profession, José María López-Barajas has lived in Austria for over three decades. From there, he helped develop the work of Opus Dei in several Eastern European countries, including Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Croatia, and Slovenia. At age 58, he is joyfully preparing for the priesthood: “Many of my friends are thinking about retirement, and the Lord gives me the opportunity to begin a new adventure: serving as a

priest. It's an honour and a responsibility!"

John Robert Bickford, a Guatemalan doctor, specialised in paediatric emergency medicine in Houston, where he worked for twenty years. He also launched a youth leadership programme for teens in New York. In 2021, Providence opened up an unexpected path: the priesthood.

"Through the example of the children I cared for, St Josemaría has taught me to live like one of them; as one of God's little children," he explains. "As a paediatrician, I had the privilege of helping heal many children. Now, as a priest, I'm excited to be an instrument to help heal many others, young and old alike."

Originally from Mendoza, Santiago Populín Such is grateful to God "for the family I was born into, where I learned to love Him and to make an effort to help others." Santiago

studied a degree in oenology and began his professional life among vineyards and wineries before deciding to dedicate himself to education. He is currently completing a doctorate in theology at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, focusing on Christian courtship as a path toward personal maturity. “As a future priest, I’m especially excited to help young people prepare for marriage and family life,” he says. “This is vital work for the good of society, grounded in the organic development of the person and the family itself.”
