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Homily of Cardinal Lazzaro You Heung-sik

Homily of the Prefect of the Dicastery for the Clergy at the ordination to the diaconate of 25 faithful of the Prelature of Opus Dei, in the Basilica of St. Eugene (Rome), 19 November 2022.

11/19/2022

Dear ordinands, concelebrating priests, family members, brothers and sisters in Christ:

I greet with special affection the Prelate of Opus Dei, Mons. Fernando Ocáriz, who has kindly invited me to preside at this liturgy. We are gathered here to celebrate the holy mysteries of our faith and, at the same time, to accompany and witness the ordination to the diaconate of these dear brothers of ours whom the Lord has chosen to serve him in his Church.

Every liturgy of ordination, whether diaconal or priestly, brings us back to the immense joy of the day when we priests were also called to say “yes” to the Lord, prostrating ourselves on the ground. The prostration of the elect and that of all the people, who kneel, is the sign of total readiness to receive the grace of the Holy Spirit for the exercise of the ordained ministry.

In a few moments, you will be called to present yourselves, as the elect,

before the Church and the holy people of God: “Let those who are to be ordained deacons come forward.” This is a moment that, perhaps, none of you expected: your lives were already directed to serve in other areas of sanctification, you all come from life and professional experiences that seemed definitive, but we know well how our paths do not always coincide with those of the Lord, and you, leaving everything, like the first disciples, took the first step, the day that the Work invited you, in the name of the Church, to undertake the courageous and joyful path of the *sequela Christi*.

These brothers of ours come from a dozen countries, and each of them has his own history, his own cultural and social background, which favors mutual enrichment and reminds us of the universality of the Church and her mission to proclaim the Gospel to the ends of the earth. In this regard,

allow me to share a personal memory: when I was Bishop of Daejeon, Korea, I arranged for some priests to spend a period of specialization in studies and pastoral collaboration in other countries: Italy, the United States, Taiwan, France, Chile... On their return, one could see a growth, an openness of heart and mind, that they had received more from these communities than they had given. Thus, diversity lived in a spirit of communion enriches and contributes to the growth of all. Each country has its own strengths as well as its own challenges, and those who are in a different situation can give and learn much from the others.

I confess to you, dear friends, that every time I am granted the grace to confer Holy Orders, I always think of the question I ask the Rector of the Seminary, or the Superior: “Are you sure they are worthy?” And entering

into myself, like the prodigal son, I ask: “How can one be fully worthy to receive such a high and great ministry? We poor men; I, poor Lazzaro, called to participate in the Priesthood of Christ?”

A few days ago, after meeting you at the Dicastery, while thinking about these things and, above all, about you, my dear brothers, I happened to have in my hands an old book entitled “The Eternal Priesthood,” by Cardinal Manning, one of the great figures of 19th century English Catholicism, first a “rival” and then a friend of Saint Cardinal Newman, in which I read precisely this: “There is no greater act than the consecration of the Body of Christ, just as there is no more sublime order than the Priesthood.” And with the gift of the Diaconate we open the door to this beautiful reality of consecration and holiness. In a few months, God willing, you will receive the next

degree of the Sacrament of Holy Orders and become priests of the New Covenant.

We have heard in the Word of God the twofold dimension of the service proper to the ordained minister: that which is rendered to God, “serving in the tent of meeting,” as the Book of Numbers repeats several times, and that which is rendered for the community, according to the words of the Apostles, who considered it necessary to find “men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and wisdom, to whom they could entrust the task” of assisting those in need (cf. Acts 6:2-3).

In a few moments, we will be witnesses of your offering to God, to his Church and to the Work; from now on, you will no longer be “masters” of yourselves; rather, you will belong to the Lord and to his holy people in order to dedicate

yourselves to the great ministry of charity, of love. It is no mere chance that the page of the Gospel of this day which is so important for you gives us the commandment of love; “abide in my love” (Jn 15:9) the Lord says in the intimacy of the Upper Room, entrusting to his friends, the disciples, the new commandment to “love one another as I have loved you” (Jn 13:34).

How does one love like Jesus, with unlimited dedication to everyone? In reality, the Master does not present us with the path of supreme effort to the point of sacrificing one's life, but with a different attitude: that of configuring ourselves to him, of belonging to him, of being his living image, so that we can transmit his love to the brothers and sisters we meet along the way.

Jesus tells his friends that others will realise that they are his disciples “if

you have love for one another” (Jn 13:35) and, therefore, what makes us credible before the world is, first of all, the way we live charity with our neighbour.

Making even more your own the cry of the Archangel Michael: “*Serviam*, I will serve!,” so that we will no longer be servants, but friends of our Lord, serving and loving as your holy Founder Josemaría reminds us: “Fall in love with Christ’s most holy Humanity. [...] When you find yourself before our Redeemer, tell him: I adore you, Lord, I beg your forgiveness. Cleanse me, purify me, set me ablaze, teach me to love.”

Our beloved Pope Francis, during the celebration of the Jubilee of Deacons in the Holy Year of Mercy, said that the deacon is at once an apostle and a servant: “Those who proclaim Jesus are called to serve, and those who serve proclaim Jesus.” Jesus “became

our servant' (Phil 2:7). He came 'not to be served, but to serve' (Mk 10:45). 'He became the servant (*diakonos*) of all,' wrote one of the Church Fathers (Saint Polycarp, Ad Phil. V, 2). [...] A servant daily learns detachment from doing everything his own way and living his life as he would. Each morning he trains himself to be generous with his life and to realise that the rest of the day will not be his own, but given over to others. One who serves cannot hoard his free time; he has to give up the idea of being the master of his day. He knows that his time is not his own, but a gift from God which is then offered back to him. Only in this way will it bear fruit. One who serves is not a slave to his own agenda, but ever ready to deal with the unexpected, ever available to his brothers and sisters and ever open to God's constant surprises. One who serves is open to surprises, to God's

constant surprises” (Pope Francis, Homily 29 May 2016).

Dear brother deacons, in order to restore hope to this wounded world, we must start from our desire to identify ourselves with Christ, to serve our neighbour with the heart, the gaze, the gestures and the words of Jesus. To the extent that we feel that we are looked upon lovingly by Him, we will be able to help others, moved by an authentic charity.

We need our relationship with Jesus Christ to go beyond a “virtual reality.” Our life must start from an interior relationship, from the knowledge of Jesus, from adoration of the Most Holy Trinity, from a bond deeper than that of a mother with her child. For this to be possible, your moments in the desert are indispensable, just as Jesus withdrew to pray at night or early in the morning.

I conclude by addressing the parents, relatives and friends of the ordinands: I thank you and congratulate you because you have allowed the Holy Spirit to act in your families. Through you, with your unconditional love, he has marked a path of happiness for your children.

I entrust your ministry and your lives to Mary Most Holy. May she who has always known how to serve and love without reserve help you to be always faithful to your call and grant you the perseverance of a holy life: *Sancta Maria, Spes nostra, Sedes Sapientiae, ora pro nobis*. Amen.

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