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Cardinal Parolin: "A priest is always another Christ"

Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State for the Holy See, ordained 29 priests of the prelate of Opus Dei this morning, in the Basilica of Saint Eugene. Pope Francis sent a letter that was read at the beginning of the ceremony.

09/05/2020

A recording of the entire ceremony is available **here**.

At the beginning of the liturgy, a letter from the Holy Father was read in which he congratulated the 29 priests and their families, mentioning especially “those who due to the health emergency cannot be present at the ordination.”

The Pope’s letter continues: “I ask the new priests to consider, along with the great gift of the priesthood, the meaning of receiving it precisely in these moments of so much pain in the world, when the presence of the suffering and merciful Christ is especially sensed; a presence that the Lord wants to be made a reality through your ministry. Just like the disciples, we will experience that, with Him on board, we will not be shipwrecked. Because this is God’s strength: to turn into something good everything that happens to us, even what is bad.” The Holy Father concluded by asking the new priests that “through their union with the

Pope they may always make that aspiration of Saint Josemaría a reality: ‘All, with Peter, to Jesus through Mary.’”

Pope Francis also sent his “affectionate greetings to dear Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz, Prelate of Opus Dei, with my wish that the Lord may continue helping him to fulfill his faithful and joyful service to the Prelature and the entire Church, especially in this year of preparation for his priestly jubilee.”

During the homily, Cardinal Pietro Parolin spoke about the figure of the good shepherd, who inspires each priest to be “a source of life, of mercy, of simplicity.”

He reminded them that “being a shepherd does not consist in a series of tasks but in a way of life.” The shepherd, for example, “doesn’t live where he wants to, but where it is best for the flock.” The shepherd “is

not so much the one who guides others but the one who shares his life with the sheep.” The idea of the shepherd “does not refer to government but to life, and that is why Jesus characterizes the good shepherd as one who gives his life for the sheep.”

“The ministry you are undertaking, dear ordinands, involves your whole life, never forget it,” Cardinal Parolin said. You are not called “to do things but to give and share your life, and thus you will be able to fully carry out the call to act ‘in the person of Christ.’” And thus “you will be able to embody the ‘style of Jesus.’ Because as Saint Josemaría Escrivá writes, the priest – whoever he may be – is always another Christ.”

To be shepherds today “means to be witnesses to mercy.” “I know how much importance you give to the sacrament of reconciliation in your

life and I can only exhort you to continue doing so, to be dispensers of the Lord's grace and forgiveness: today's world has such great need of this." "May the words of your preaching be words of life ... Before exhorting, always proclaim the beauty of salvation; this beauty attracts us to then live a moral life at the height of the call."

Another characteristic of the shepherd, the Cardinal said, is simplicity, of which the saint who is celebrated today in the liturgical calendar (Saint Teresa of Calcutta) speaks to us and which is obtained, among other things, "in the silence of prayer." Simplicity is born from the transparency of prayer and is manifested in concrete options such as "leading an orderly life, without getting caught up in a thousand different things, which could jeopardize the simplicity of a heart fully dedicated to God."

Finally, the Cardinal referred to the need to bear in mind the mission of “bringing to all men and women the voice of the good shepherd, so that they feel loved by Christ.” This requires “not being anxious to be relevant but to make Jesus known.” “It requires combining pastoral charity and healthy creativity, fidelity and flexibility, faith and a heart that is available; going in search of the others rather than waiting for them; welcoming and not rejecting the most complex questions of people today, especially those of the young.”

“The Church is accompanying you; we are all accompanying you with our prayer. And the Church thanks you for your ‘yes,’ the offering of your whole life.”

At the conclusion of the ceremony, the Prelate of Opus Dei thanked Cardinal Parolin for being present,

who just yesterday was in Lebanon to bring there the Pope's closeness and concern. "His presence here immediately leads us to that of the Holy Father Francis, who sends his Apostolic Blessing to the new priests, their families and all those present at this celebration. Let us continue supporting the Pope and those who assist him with our prayer."

"I wish to address, especially to the parents of the new priests, a few words of gratitude," the Prelate added. "Thank you for having collaborated with God to make the vocation to the priesthood take root in your children. May God, also through your prayer, fill with fruit the priestly ministry that your children will carry out from now on, with the motherly mediation of Holy Mary."

The new priests

Among the ordinands is Andrej Matis, 31, who will be the first priest of the prelature from Slovakia.

Before studying theology in Rome, Andrej was a professional musician and worked for several years as a violinist in the *Mucha* chamber music quartet, performing in concerts in Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Italy, Poland, France, Austria, and Luxembourg. “Beauty can open up doors and sometimes show people the right path in life,” he says. “I too thought that these considerations were just nice words, but I’ve changed my mind.”

Another of the new priests is the young Chilean doctor Juan Esteban Ureta, 37, who worked as an internist in a medical center in Concepción. He says that now, as a priest, he is excited “to be an instrument so that many people may receive forgiveness and God’s mercy. I would like to learn how to transmit

effectively the good news of the Gospel, that we are all loved by Christ.”

Among the new priests are several Africans, including Andrew Ekemu from Uganda. Born in Kapchorwa in 1981, Andrew studied veterinary medicine at Makerere University in Kampala. He worked for several years vaccinating cows against nagana and treating African marabou at the Uganda National Zoo. During his studies in theology prior to priestly ordination, he completed his doctoral thesis on “The Vision of History in the Book of the Prophet Daniel.” He says that “in Uganda we are a young population, and that is why I ask for your prayers so that many young people in my country may discover the greatness of a life lived close to Christ and in the service of others.”

When thinking about his future as a priest, the Italian Giovanni Vassallo hopes “that in these times of pandemic we may know how to accompany people closely.” Giovanni is a native of Palermo and, before studying theology at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, he studied classical philology at the *Università della Sapienza* in Rome. For 10 years he was part of the management team of the Residenza Universitaria Internazionale, where university students from many countries live, while working as a teacher of Latin and literature at a school in Rome.

In this special moment, the Mexican Roberto Vera thanks God “for the wonderful family in which I was born, where I learned to love Him above all things.” And he adds: “God asks me now to be a priest to celebrate Mass, reconcile people to Him through confession, administer

the other sacraments, speak about Jesus to others, accompany those who need me and much more. It is a very big mission, so I'm relying on the prayers of everyone reading these words."

Guillermo Bueno, another of the ordinands, was born in Seville (Spain) in 1983. A Telecommunications Engineer with a degree from the University of Seville, he specialized in Robotics and Automation. Before considering the priesthood, he worked as a teacher and engineer, especially in the development of biometric identification systems. In 2013 he moved to Rome to pursue a doctorate in moral theology at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross. "I have as a wonderful example of a priest in Saint Josemaría Escrivá," Guillermo says, "a man who knew how to serve everyone, and who always strove to love people with Christ's heart."

The 29 new priests come from Spain, Mexico, Guatemala, Chile, Uruguay, Ivory Coast, Slovakia, Argentina, Costa Rica, the Netherlands, Uganda, Peru and Italy. These are their names:

- Santiago Altieri Massa Daus (Uruguay)
- Alejandro Armesto García-Jalón (Spain)
- José Luis Benito Roldán (Spain)
- Guillermo Jesús Bueno Delgado (Spain)
- Juan Luis Orestes Castilla Florián (Guatemala)
- José Luis Chinguel Beltrán (Peru)
- José de la Madrid Ochoa (Mexico)
- Andrew Rowns Ekemu (Uganda)
- Pablo Erdozáin Castiella (Spain)
- Felipe José Izquierdo Ibáñez (Chile)

- Kouamé Achille Koffi (Ivory Coast)
- Santiago Teodoro López López (Spain)
- Martín Ezequiel Luque Marengo (Argentina)
- Andrej Matis (Slovakia)
- Carlos Medarde Artime (Spain)
- José Javier Mérida Calderón (Guatemala)
- Claudio Josemaría Minakata Urzúa (Mexico)
- Andrés Fernando Montero Marín (Costa Rica)
- Ignacio Moyano Gómez (Spain)
- Miguel Agustín Mullen (Argentina)
- Miguel Ocaña González (Spain)
- Ricardo Regidor Sánchez (Spain)
- Antonio Rodríguez Tovar (Spain)
- Manel Serra Palos (Spain)
- Juan Esteban Ureta Cardoen (Chile)
- Giovanni Vassallo (Italy)

- Roberto Vera Aguilar (Mexico)
 - Juan Ignacio Vergara
(Netherlands)
 - José Vidal Vázquez (Spain)
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