



CONGREGATIO PRO CLERICIS

“Almighty Father, grant to these servants of yours the dignity of the priesthood. Renew within them the Spirit of holiness. As co-workers with the order of bishops may they be faithful to the ministry that they receive from you, Lord God, and be to others a model of right conduct.”

Pontificale Romanum: De Ordinatione Episcopi, presbyterorum et diaconorum,

Edition typical, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis 1990)

From the Vatican, 15th January 2010

Dear Brothers in the Priesthood,

A central part of the prayer of ordination recalls how the Priest is essentially a gift, and, exactly in view of that “supernatural gift”, he carries himself with a dignity which everyone, clergy and lay faithful, are called to recognise. One has in mind a dignity which is not the work of man but which is the pure gift of grace, to which one is called and which no one can demand as a right. The dignity of the priesthood, bestowed by the “Almighty Father”, must be evident in the life of priests: in their sanctity, in their welcoming humanity full of humility and pastoral charity, in the clarity of their faithfulness to the Gospel and the doctrine of the Church, in the sobriety and solemnity of their celebration of the divine mysteries, in their ecclesiastical garb. Everything in the priest must lead him to recall, to himself and to the world, that he is the object of an unmerited gift beyond any merit of his, which makes him an efficacious presence of the Absolute in the world for the salvation of men.

The Spirit of holiness, which one begs might be poured forth anew, is the guarantee to be able to live the vocation one has received in “holiness” and, at the same time, the condition of the very possibility to be “faithful to the ministry”. Faithfulness is the wonderful meeting of the faithful freedom of God and the created but wounded

freedom of man, which, however, through the power of the Spirit, becomes sacramentally capable “to be to others a model of right conduct”. Far from reducing the ministerial priesthood to a moralistic category, such an exhortation shows the “fullness” of life: a life which is really thus is a life that is integrally Christian.

The Priest, clothed with the Spirit of the Almighty Father, is called to “guide” the journey of sanctification of the people entrusted to him by teaching and the celebration of the sacraments and, above all, with his own life, with the certainty that this is the only end for which the priest himself exists: Paradise!

The gift of the Father makes of the “sons-priests” his beloved; a *portio electa populi Dei*, which is called to “be chosen” and also to gleam by the holiness of life and the witness of faith.

May the memory of the gift received, always renewed by the Spirit and the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Handmaid of the Lord and Tabernacle of the Holy Spirit, allow each Priest to “faithfully fulfil” his mission in the world, in joyful expectation of the heavenly reward kept safe for the chosen sons, who are also heirs.

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