



## CONGREGATIO PRO CLERICIS

### **EXTRACT FROM THE HOMILY OF CARDINAL CLÁUDIO HUMMES 21ST SEPTEMBER 2009 CONVENTION FOR NEW BISHOPS OF THE WORLD GATHERED IN ROME**

Dear New Bishops,

We find ourselves in the Year for Priests. Priests, as ordained ministers and the principal co-workers of their respective Bishops, are also sacramentally bound to the apostolic mission. This special Year has been announced by the Holy Father for the good of priests, due to their irreplaceable importance in the Church. As such they have today a particular need to be supported and renewed spiritually and pastorally. Thus, I would like to fraternally propose to you to be very close to your priests, to pray with them and for them. The Holy Father desires, with heartfelt care, that this Year for Priests might be well received and put into effect by Bishops in their Dioceses. Our priests need to be loved and supported in their vocation and mission, above all by their own Bishop and by their community. They wish to be recognised for that which they are and that which they do. They also need to be assisted and guided to renew in their hearts the true identity of the priesthood and the true meaning of celibacy. In this context, the renewal and reinvigoration of their priestly spirituality will be decisive, which has as its foundation in being true and unconditioned disciples of Jesus Christ, who has configured them to Himself, Head and Shepherd of the Church. For this discipleship, so determining of their lives, it will be of great help for priests to listen and to pray aloud the Word of God, the daily celebration of the Eucharist, the frequent use of the Sacrament of Confession, the recitation of the Liturgy of the Hours, frequent visits to the Most Blessed Sacrament, the recitation of the Holy Rosary and other means of spiritual enrichment and of personal encounter and intimacy with Jesus Christ. Also of great importance are the annual Spiritual Exercises and ongoing formation.

Moreover, it is necessary to awaken the missionary consciousness of priests. The Church knows there is a missionary urgency being experienced throughout the world, not only *ad gentes*, but also within the very flock of the Church already established for centuries in the Christian world. It is necessary to promote a true missionary urge in our Dioceses and in our parishes. All our countries have become a land of mission, in the strict sense. A new fire needs to be lit in our priests and in us ourselves, a new

passion to make us arise and go to meet people where they live and work, to bring to them anew the Kerygma, the first proclamation of the person of Jesus Christ, Crucified and Risen, and of his Kingdom, to lead them to a personal and then a communitarian encounter with the Lord. Our beloved Pope, Benedict XVI, referring to the situation in the lands of age-old Christian tradition, has said, “We should give serious thought as to how to achieve a true evangelization in this day and age [...] It is not enough for us to strive to preserve the existing flock” (Discourse to the German Bishops, 21<sup>st</sup> August 2005), but we need a true mission. It is not enough merely to welcome those who come to us, in the parish or in the parish house. There is an urgent necessity to arise and go in search above all of the many baptised who are distanced from participation in the life of our communities, and then to seek also those who know little or nothing of Jesus Christ. The mission has always renewed the Church. The same will also be true for priests when they go into the mission. This, then, is a whole programme to develop during this Year for Priests.

Cardinal Cláudio Hummes  
Archbishop Emeritus of São Paulo  
Prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy