



The Holy See

HOLY MASS AND EPISCOPAL ORDINATION

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

Dedication of the Lateran Basilica

Basilica of St John Lateran

Monday, 9 November 2015

[Multimedia]

Beloved Brothers and Sons,

It will do us good to carefully consider the great responsibility to which this brother of ours has been called.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, who was sent by the Father to redeem the human race, in turn sent the Twelve Apostles into the world so that, filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, they might preach the Gospel to all people and unite them under one Shepherd, and that they might sanctify them and guide them to salvation.

In order to perpetuate this apostolic ministry from one generation to the next, the Twelve chose other men to share in their work. Through the laying on of hands, they passed on to them the gift of the Spirit which they themselves had received from Christ, thereby conferring the fullness of the Sacrament of Orders. Thus, through an uninterrupted succession of bishops this earliest ministry has been preserved in the living Tradition of the Church, and the work of the Saviour continues and develops to our own day.

In the bishop surrounded by his priests, Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal High Priest, is present in your midst. For it is Christ who, through the ministry of the bishop, continues to preach the Gospel of salvation and to sanctify believers by means of the sacraments of faith. It is Christ who, through the paternal role of the bishop, draws new members to his body which is the Church. It is

Christ who, in the wisdom and prudence of the bishop, guides the People of God along their pilgrimage here on earth until at last they reach eternal bliss.

Therefore, welcome with gratitude and joy, this brother of ours whom we bishops are about to receive into the episcopal college by the laying on of hands. Render to him the honour that is owed to the minister of Christ and the dispenser of the mysteries of God, to whom the testimony of the Gospel and the ministry of the Spirit for sanctification have been entrusted. Remember the words of Jesus to the Apostles: “He who hears you hears me, and he who rejects you rejects me, and he who rejects me rejects him who sent me”.

As for you, dearest brother, chosen by the Lord, consider that you have been chosen from among men and for men; you have been appointed to the things pertaining to God. Indeed, episcopacy is the name of a service, not of an honour, since the bishop must strive to serve rather than to rule, according to the Master’s commandment: “whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all”.

Proclaim the Word at every opportune and inopportune occasion. Admonish, rebuke, but always with kindness; exhort unfailing in patience and teaching. May your words be simple, that all may understand, may they not be long homilies. Allow me to say to you: remember your father, when he was so happy to have found another parish near your home town, where Mass was celebrated without a homily! Homilies are truly the conveyance of God’s grace: simple, so that all may understand and want to improve themselves.

In the Church entrusted to you — in a special way here in Rome — I would like to entrust to you the presbyters, the seminarians: you have that charism! Be a loyal guardian and dispenser of the mysteries of Christ. As the Father has placed you at the head of his family, always follow the example of the Good Shepherd, who knows his sheep and is known by them, and who does not hesitate to give his life for them.

With your heart, love with a fatherly and brotherly love all those whom God entrusts to you: as I said, first the presbyters, deacons and seminarians; but also the poor, the defenceless and those in need of acceptance and help. Exhort the faithful to cooperate in the apostolic commitment and listen to them willingly and patiently: often a great deal of patience is required... but the Kingdom of God is made in this way.

Remember that you must pay careful attention to those who do not belong to the one fold of Christ, because they too have been entrusted to you in the Lord.

Remember that in the Catholic Church, brought together in the commitment to charity, you are united to the College of Bishops and you must carry within you the solicitude of all Churches, caring generously for those who are most in need of help. As the start of the Year of Mercy draws

near, I ask you as a brother to be merciful. The Church and the world need so much mercy. Teach the presbyters and seminarians the way of mercy. With words, yes, but above all with your attitude. The mercy of the Father always receives, there is always room in his heart, no one is ever pushed away. Wait, wait.... I wish you this: so much mercy.

Watch lovingly over the whole flock, among whom the Holy Spirit places you in order to support the Church of God: in the name of the Father, whose image you make present; in the name of Jesus Christ his Son, by whom you were constituted a teacher, priest and shepherd; in the name of the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the Church and whose power sustains our weakness.