



The Holy See

MASS FOR A GROUP OF NEW DEACONS

HOMILY OF JOHN PAUL II

Castelgandolfo, 11 April 1980

Dear sons and brothers in Christ,

1. In the presence of the community of the faithful, represented by a group of your own parents, relatives and friends, you have come here to ratify the oblation of your lives as deacons of God's Church. In doing so you are filled with confidence because you know that your vocation and your ministry find their effective support in the power of Christ's Resurrection, which the Church is celebrating with joyful gratitude and love throughout this holy season.

The Church has indeed placed a great treasure in your hands, for she has called you to be associated in a special way with the Lord Jesus in his worship of the Father and in his service to humanity. You are called to a greater conformity with Christ the Servant, and from now on your discipleship will be expressed in a ministry of the word, of the altar and of charity.

2. Your whole lives have to be rooted in the word of God, which you are called to accept and to communicate in all its fullness, just as it is proclaimed by the one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church. In the Eucharistic Sacrifice - in which you participate and which will be for ever the centre of your lives - Christ himself will offer your whole ministry of charity to his Father. From now on, you will have a particular relationship with the poor, the suffering and the sick - with all those in need. And remember always that the greatest service you will render to God's people is to bring to them his life-giving and uplifting Gospel of salvation.

3. To equip you for this task of service, the Church has solemnly invoked upon you the Holy Spirit and his sevenfold gift. He it is, the Holy Spirit, who is able to configure you ever more deeply to the Jesus whom you represent, and who wishes to prolong through you his salvific contact with

humanity. The people must be able to see Christ in you; the Master must be recognized in the disciple. It is in the name of Jesus that you are sent out, and everything that you are able to accomplish will be done "by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene".

4. In order to be conscious of your task of ministering in his holy name, and in order to remain effectively united with him, you must pray. You must frequently lift up your hearts to the Lord who has called you by name and entrusted you with a great responsibility. In this regard, the Liturgy of the Hours will be the enrichment of your lives and the guarantee of the effectiveness of your ministry of service. Prayer must sustain your service and your service in turn must, time and again, lead you back to prayer. Be assured that Mary, the Mother of the Risen Lord, will support you in your efforts and remain close to you with her love.

5. And finally, dear sons and brothers, so that your joy may be complete, remember the words of Jesus, the assurance he has given us, the wonderful promise he has made to us: "...if any one serves me, the Father will honour him". Yes, as deacons, you are called to serve Christ in his members and to be honoured by his Eternal Father, to whom be all praise and thanksgiving in the unity of the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

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