
Homily – Vespers and Oath of Fidelity for the Ordination to the Permanent Diaconate - St. Louis, Castroville – May 17, 2023

Pope Francis has summarized diaconal spirituality in a few words: (quote) *“Willingness on the inside, from the heart, ready to say yes, docile, without making life revolve around one’s own agenda; and open on the outside, looking at everyone, especially those who are left out, those who feel excluded.”* (end of quote). These two dimensions are like two streams of water flowing out from the same spring: Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Give thanks! *“He is the image of the invisible God, / the first-born of all creatures.”* (1 Col). God’s creative and redemptive work are one and the same in Christ. He is the beginning and the end. By shedding his blood on the Cross, Jesus Christ reconciles heaven and earth, recreating original harmony in accordance with the Father’s plan. Let your gratitude for your life and your redemption shine through the gratuitous gift of yourselves through your ministry. *“Through him we have redemption...”* (Id). *“Let us give thanks to the Father for having made you worthy to share the lot of the saints in light.”* (Id).

Be fed! The thirst and hunger that drive us towards God are quenched in Christ crucified and risen. The new life – and the food that sustains it – comes to us from Him through the gift of the Holy Spirit and the sacraments. What is this manna!? Blood and water flowed out from the Lord’s side on the cross. These are symbols of Baptism and the Eucharist. They are a sign of the everlasting covenant between the Lord and his bride, the Church. He is the food

that comes down from heaven to whose service at the altar you will devote yourselves. *“In God alone is my soul at rest; / my help come from him. / He alone is my rock, my stronghold, / my fortress: I stand firm.”* (Ps 62).

Be transformed! The High and Eternal Priest offered Himself as a pleasing sacrifice to the Father. The Paschal Mystery extends to all eternity, including your own personal history, not without the sacrifice of yourselves through His eternal ministry. As you prepare to join into the Holy Order of the Deacons, you are made part of the offering. The Holy Spirit is willing to transform you into the only sacrifice which is *“always able to save those who approach God through him, since he lives forever to make intercession for them.”* (Heb).

Be sent! *“The earth has yielded its harvest; / God, our God, blesses us.”* (Ps 67). The fruit born from Mary was not conceived by a human act, but by the Holy Spirit. The Fruit from which we are fed is not only a human saint but Almighty God. Once He feeds you, He sends you to do his work. *“O God, be gracious and bless us / and let your face shed its light upon us. / So will your ways be known upon earth / and all nations learn your salvation.”* (Ps 67).

May Our Lady of Guadalupe bring forth the fruit of her womb to you and through you. May she help you to be docile to the Holy Spirit so that you are willing in the inside and open to the outside. And may she lead you to give thanks, be fed, be transformed and – soon – be sent.