**Pope's Address to New Priests at Their Ordination – May 12, 2014**

*(For the Homily, the Pope pronounced the words suggested by the Rite of Ordination of Presbyters, pausing to stress some passages.)*

Dearest Brothers, these our sons and brothers have been called to the Order of the Presbyterate. As you well know, the Lord Jesus is the only High Priest of the New Testament, but in Him all the people of God was constituted a priestly people. Nevertheless, among all his disciples, the Lord Jesus wished to choose some in particular, so that, in his name, they could exercise publicly the priestly office in favor of all men, continuing his personal mission of teacher, priest and shepherd.

After mature reflection, we are about to elevate these our brothers to the Order of Presbyters, so that they cooperate in the service of Christ teacher, priest and shepherd, to build the Body of Christ, which is the Church, in the people of God and the holy temple of the Spirit.

They, in fact, will be configured to Christ, High and Eternal Priest, that is, they will be consecrated as true priests of the New Testament, and with this title, which unites them in the priesthood to their Bishop, they will be preachers of the Gospel, pastors of the people of God, and will preside over the acts of worship, especially in the celebration of the Lord’s sacrifice.

In regard to you, beloved brothers and sons, who are about to be promoted to the Order of the Presbyterate, consider that, by exercising the ministry of the Sacred Doctrine, you will sharers in the mission of Christ, the only teacher. Dispense to all that Word, which you yourselves received with joy from your mothers, from your catechists. Read and meditate assiduously the Word of the Lord to believe

what you read, to teach what you have learned in the faith, to live what you have taught.

Therefore, may your doctrine, which is not yours, be the nourishment of the people of God: you are not masters of the doctrine! It is the Lord’s doctrine, and you must be faithful to the Lord’s doctrine!

Therefore, may your doctrine be the nourishment of the people of God, joy and sustenance of the faithful of Christ, the perfume of your life, so that by word and example you build the house of God, which is the Church.

Thus you will continue the sacrificial work of Christ. Through your ministry, the spiritual sacrifice of the faithful is made perfect because it is joined to Christ’s sacrifice, which is offered by your hands in the name of the whole Church in a bloodless way on the altar, in the celebration of the holy mysteries.

Realize then what you do, imitate what you celebrate, because by participating in the mystery of the Death and Resurrection of the Lord, you bear the death of Christ in your members and you walk with Him in newness of life.

With Baptism, you will add new faithful to the people of God; with the Sacrament of Penance, you will remit sins in the name of Christ and of the Church. And I wish to pause here and to ask you, for the love of Jesus Christ: never tire of being merciful! Please! You have that capacity of forgiveness that the Lord had, who did not come to condemn, but to forgive! Have much mercy! And if the scruple comes to you of being too “forgiving,” think of that priest about whom I spoke to you, who would go in front of the Tabernacle and say: “Lord, forgive me if I have forgiven too much. But it is You who gave me the bad example!” And I say to you, truly: I feel so much sorrow when I meet people who no longer go to Confession because they were beaten and shouted at. They felt that the doors of the churches were shut in their face! Please, don’t do this: mercy, mercy! The good shepherd enters by the door and the door of mercy is the Lord’s wounds: if you do not enter your ministry through the Lord’s wounds, you will not be good pastors.

With Holy Oil you will give relief to the sick, celebrating the sacred rites and raising in different hours of the day the prayer of praise and supplication, you will be the voice of the people of God and of the Conscious of having been chosen among men and constituted in their favor to attend to the things of God, exercise in gladness and in sincere charity the priestly work of Christ, being intent on pleasing God alone and not yourselves.

And think about what Saint Augustine said of pastors who sought to please themselves, who used the Lord’s sheep has food and to clothe themselves, to don the majesty of a ministry that one did not know if it was from God. In fine, by participating in Christ’s mission, head and shepherd, in filial communion with your Bishop, work to unite the faithful in one family, to lead them to God the Father through Christ in the Holy Spirit. Always keep before your eyes the example of the Good Shepherd, who did not come to be served, but to serve, and to seek and save what was lost.

*[Original text: Italian]*