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DECREE on PRIESTLY life and MINISTRY

December 7, 1965



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SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

DECREE ON THE MINISTRY AND LIFE OF PRIESTS

December 7, 1965

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PAUL, BISHOP,
SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF
GOD TOGETHER WITH THE
FATHERS OF THE SACRED
COUNCIL

FOR EVERLASTING MEMORY

DECREE
ON THE MINISTRY
AND LIFE OF PRIESTS

PREFACE

1. The excellence of the order of priests in the Church has already been recalled several times to the minds of all by this most sacred Synod.¹ Since, however, in the renewal of Christ's Church tasks of the greatest importance and of ever-increasing difficulty are being assigned to this order, it has seemed eminently useful to treat of the subject of priests at greater length and depth. What is said here applies to all priests, especially those devoted to the care of souls, though suitable adaptations are to be made for priests who are Religious.

By sacred ordination and by the mission they receive from their bishops, priests are promoted to the service of Christ, the

Teacher, the Priest, and the King. They share in His ministry of unceasingly building up the Church on earth into the People of God, the Body of Christ, and the Temple of the Holy Spirit.

Now, the pastoral and human circumstances of the priesthood have in very many instances been thoroughly changed. Therefore, in order that the ministry of priests may be carried on more effectively and their lives better provided for, this most sacred Synod declares and decrees as follows.

CHAPTER I

THE PRIESTHOOD IN THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

2. The Lord Jesus, “Whom the Father has made holy and sent into the world” (Jn. 10:36), has made His whole Mystical Body share in the anointing by the Spirit with which He Himself has been anointed.¹ For in Him all the faithful are made a holy and royal priesthood. They offer spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ, and they proclaim the perfections of Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light.² Hence, there is no member who does not have a part in the mission of the whole Body. Rather, each one ought to hallow Jesus in his heart³ and bear witness to Jesus in the spirit of prophecy.⁴

Now, the same Lord has established certain ministers among the faithful in order to join them together in one body where “all the members have not the same function” (Rom. 12:4). These ministers in the society of the faithful would be able by the sacred power of their order to offer sacrifice and to remit sins.⁵ They would perform their priestly office publicly for men in the name of Christ. So it was that Christ sent the Apostles just as He Himself had been sent by the Father.⁶ Through these same Apostles He made their successors, the bishops,⁷ sharers in His consecration and mission. Their ministerial role has been handed down to priests in a limited degree. Thus established in the order of the priesthood, they are co-workers of the episcopal order⁸ in the proper fulfillment of the apostolic mission entrusted to the latter order by Christ.⁹

Inasmuch as it is connected with the episcopal order, the priestly office shares in the authority by which Christ Himself builds up, sanctifies and rules His Body. Therefore, while the sacerdotal office of priests indeed presupposes the sacraments of Christian initiation, it is conferred by that special sacrament through which priests, by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are marked with a special character and are so configured to Christ the Priest that they can act in the person of Christ the Head.¹⁰

Since in their own measure priests participate in the office of the Apostles, God gives them the grace to be ministers of Christ Jesus among the people. They shoulder the sacred task of the gospel, so that the offering of the people can be made acceptable through the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit.¹¹ For, through the apostolic proclamation of the gospel the People of God is called together and assembled so that when all who belong to this People have been sanctified by the Holy Spirit, they can offer themselves as “a sacrifice, living, holy, pleasing to God” (Rom. 12:1). Through the ministry of priests, the spiritual sacrifice of the faithful is made perfect in union with the sacrifice of Christ, the sole Mediator. Through the hands of priests and in the name of the whole Church, the Lord’s sacrifice is offered in the Eucharist in a sacramental and unbloody manner until He Himself returns.¹²

The ministry of priests is directed towards this work and is perfected in it. For their ministry, which takes its start from the gospel message, derives its power and force from the sacrifice of Christ. Its aim is that “the entire commonwealth of the redeemed, that is, the community and society of the saints, be offered as a universal sacrifice to God through the High Priest who in His Passion offered His very Self for us that we might be the body of so exalted a Head.”¹³

The purpose, therefore, which priests pursue by their ministry and life is the glory of God the Father as it is to be achieved in Christ. That glory consists in this: that men knowingly, freely, and gratefully accept what God has achieved perfectly through Christ, and manifest it in their whole lives. Hence, whether engaged in

prayer and adoration, preaching the Word, offering the Eucharistic sacrifice, ministering the other sacraments, or performing any of the works of the ministry for men, priests are contributing to the extension of God's glory as well as to the development of divine life in men. Since all of these activities result from Christ's Passover, they will be crowned in the glorious return of the same Lord when He Himself hands over the Kingdom to His God and Father.¹⁴

3. Priests are taken from among men and appointed for men in the things which pertain to God, in order to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.¹⁵ Hence they deal with other men as with brothers. This was the way that the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, a man sent by the Father to men, dwelt among us and willed to become like His brothers in all things except sin.¹⁶ The holy Apostles imitated Him; and blessed Paul, the teacher of the Gentiles, who was "set apart for the gospel of God" (Rom. 1:1), declares that he became all things to all men that he might save all.¹⁷

By their vocation and ordination, priests of the New Testament are indeed set apart in a certain sense within the midst of God's people. But this is so, not that they may be separated from this people or from any man, but that they may be totally dedicated to the work for which the Lord has raised them up.¹⁸ They cannot be ministers of Christ unless they are witnesses and dispensers of a life other than this earthly one. But they cannot be of service to men if they remain strangers to the life and conditions of men.¹⁹ Their ministry itself by a special title forbids them to be conformed to this world.²⁰ Yet at the same time this ministry requires that they live in this world among men, and that as good shepherds they know their sheep. It requires that they seek to lead those who are not of this sheepfold so that they too may hear the voice of Christ and that there may be one fold and one Shepherd.²¹

In the achievement of these goals, priests will find great help in the possession of those virtues which are deservedly esteemed in human affairs, such as goodness of heart, sincerity, strength, and constancy of character, zealous pursuit of justice, civility, and those

other traits which the Apostle Paul commends saying: "Whatever things are true, whatever honorable, whatever just, whatever holy, whatever lovable, whatever of good repute, if there be any virtue, if anything worthy of praise, think upon these things" (Phil. 4:8).²²

CHAPTER II

THE MINISTRY OF PRIESTS

I. *Priestly Functions*

4. The People of God finds its unity first of all through the Word of the living God,¹ which is quite properly sought from the lips of priests.² Since no one can be saved who has not first believed,³ priests, as co-workers with their bishops, have as their primary duty the proclamation of the gospel of God to all.⁴ In this way they fulfill the Lord's command: "Go into the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16:15).⁵ Thus they establish and build up the People of God.

For through the saving Word the spark of faith is lit in the heart of unbelievers, and fed in the hearts of the faithful. By this faith the community of the faithful begins and grows. As the Apostle says: "Faith depends on hearing and hearing on the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17).

Toward all men, therefore, priests have the duty of sharing the gospel truth ⁶ in which they themselves rejoice in the Lord. And so, whether by honorable behavior among the nations they lead them to glorify God,⁷ whether by openly preaching they proclaim the mystery of Christ to unbelievers, whether they hand on the Christian faith or explain the Church's teaching, or whether in the light of Christ they strive to deal with contemporary problems, the task of priests is not to teach their own wisdom but God's Word, and to summon all men urgently to conversion and to holiness.⁸

No doubt, priestly preaching is often very difficult in the

circumstances of the modern world. If it is to influence the mind of the listener more fruitfully, such preaching must not present God's Word in a general and abstract fashion only, but it must apply the perennial truth of the gospel to the concrete circumstances of life.

Thus the ministry of the Word is carried out in many ways, according to the various needs of those who hear and the special gifts of those who preach. In areas or communities which are non-Christian, the gospel message draws men to faith and the sacraments of salvation.⁹ In the Christian community itself, especially among those who seem to understand or believe little of what they practice, the preaching of the Word is needed for the very administration of the sacraments. For these are sacraments of faith, and faith is born of the Word and nourished by it.¹⁰

Such is especially true of the Liturgy of the Word during the celebration of Mass. In this celebration, the proclamation of the death and resurrection of the Lord is inseparably joined to the response of the people who hear, and to the very offering whereby Christ ratified the New Testament in His blood. The faithful share in this offering both by their prayers and by their recognition of the sacrament for what it is.¹¹

5. God, who alone is holy and bestows holiness, willed to raise up for Himself as companions and helpers men who would humbly dedicate themselves to the work of sanctification. Hence, through the ministry of the bishop, God consecrates priests so that they can share by a special title in the priesthood of Christ. Thus, in performing sacred functions they can act as the ministers of Him who in the liturgy continually exercises His priestly office on our behalf by the action of His Spirit.¹²

By Baptism men are brought into the People of God. By the sacrament of Penance sinners are reconciled to God and the Church. By the oil of the sick the ailing find relief. And, especially by the celebration of Mass, men offer sacramentally the sacrifice of Christ. In administering all the sacraments, as St. Ignatius Martyr already bore witness in the days of the primitive Church,¹³ priests by various titles are bound together hierarchically with the bishops. Thus

in a certain way they make him present in every gathering of the faithful.¹⁴

The other sacraments, as well as every ministry of the Church and every work of the apostolate, are linked with the holy Eucharist and are directed toward it.¹⁵ For the most blessed Eucharist contains the Church's entire spiritual wealth,¹⁶ that is, Christ Himself, our Passover and living bread. Through His very flesh, made vital and vitalizing by the Holy Spirit, He offers life to men. They are thereby invited and led to offer themselves, their labors, and all created things together with Him.

Hence the Eucharist shows itself to be the source and the apex of the whole work of preaching the gospel. Those under instruction are introduced by stages to a sharing in the Eucharist. The faithful, already marked with the sacred seal of Baptism and Confirmation, are through the reception of the Eucharist fully joined to the Body of Christ.

Thus the Eucharistic Action is the very heartbeat of the congregation of the faithful over which the priest presides. So priests must instruct them to offer to God the Father the Divine Victim in the sacrifice of the Mass, and to join to it the offering of their own lives. In the spirit of Christ the Shepherd, priests should train them to submit their sins with a contrite heart to the Church in the sacrament of Penance. Thus, mindful of the Lord's words: "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand" (Mt. 4:17), the people will be drawn ever closer to Him each day.

Priests should likewise teach them to participate in the celebrations of the sacred liturgy in such a way that they can rise to sincere prayer during them. They must lead the faithful along to an ever-improved spirit of prayer offered throughout the whole of life according to the graces and needs of each. They must persuade everyone to the discharge of the duties of his proper state in life, and bring the saintlier ones to an appropriate exercise of the evangelical counsels. They must show the faithful how to sing to the Lord hymns and spiritual songs in their hearts, always giving

thanks to God the Father for all things in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ.¹⁷

Priests themselves extend to the different hours of the day the praise and thanksgiving of the Eucharistic celebration by reciting the Divine Office. Through it they pray to God in the name of the whole Church on behalf of the people entrusted to them and indeed for the whole world.

In the house of prayer the most Holy Eucharist is celebrated and preserved. There the faithful gather and find help and comfort through venerating the presence of the Son of God our Saviour, offered for us on the sacrificial altar. This house must be well kept and suitable for prayer and sacred functions.¹⁸ There, pastors and the faithful are called to respond with grateful hearts to the gift of Him who through His humanity constantly pours divine life into the members of His Body.¹⁹

Let priests take care to cultivate an appropriate knowledge and facility in the liturgy, so that by their own liturgical ministry, the Christian communities entrusted to them may ever more adequately give praise to God, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

6. To the degree of their authority and in the name of their bishop, priests exercise the office of Christ the Head and the Shepherd. Thus they gather God's family together as a brotherhood of living unity, and lead it through Christ and in the Spirit to God the Father.²⁰ For the exercise of this ministry, as for other priestly duties, spiritual power is conferred upon them for the upbuilding of the Church.²¹

In achieving this goal, priests must treat all with outstanding humanity, in imitation of the Lord. They should act toward men, not as seeking to win their favor²² but in accord with the demands of Christian doctrine and life. They should teach and admonish men as dearly beloved sons,²³ according to the words of the Apostle: "Be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, entreat, rebuke with all patience and teaching" (2 Tim. 4:2).²⁴

Therefore, as educators in the faith, priests must see to it, either by themselves or through others, that the faithful are led individually in the Holy Spirit to a development of their own vocation as required by the gospel, to a sincere and active charity, and to that freedom with which Christ has made us free.²⁵ Ceremonies however beautiful, or associations however flourishing will be of little value if they are not directed toward educating men in the attainment of Christian maturity.²⁶

To further this goal, priests should help men see what is required and what is God's will in the great and small events of life. Christians should also be taught that they do not live for themselves alone, but, according to the demands of the new law of charity, every man must administer to others the grace he has received.²⁷ In this way all will discharge in a Christian manner their duties within the community of men.

Although he has obligations toward all men, a priest has the poor and the lowlier entrusted to him in a special way. The Lord Himself showed that He was united to them,²⁸ and the fact that the gospel was preached to them is mentioned as a sign of Messianic activity.²⁹ With special diligence, priests should look after youth as well as married people and parents. It is desirable that each of these groups join together in friendly associations and thereby help one another act more easily and adequately as Christians in a condition of life which is often demanding.

Priests should remember that all Religious, both men and women, who have a distinguished place indeed in the house of the Lord, deserve special care in their pursuit of spiritual progress for the good of the whole Church. Finally and above all, priests must be solicitous for the sick and the dying, visiting them and strengthening them in the Lord.³⁰

The office of pastor is not confined to the care of the faithful as individuals, but is also properly extended to the formation of a genuine Christian community. If community spirit is to be duly fostered, it must embrace not only the local Church but the universal Church. The local community should not only promote the

care of its own faithful, but filled with a missionary zeal, it should also prepare the way to Christ for all men. To this community in a special way are entrusted catechumens and the newly baptized, who must be gradually educated to recognize and lead a Christian life.

No Christian community, however, can be built up unless it has its basis and center in the celebration of the most Holy Eucharist. Here, therefore, all education in the spirit of community must originate.³¹ If this celebration is to be sincere and thorough, it must lead to various works of charity and mutual help, as well as to missionary activity and to different forms of Christian witness.

Moreover, by charity, prayer, example, and works of penance, the Church community exercises a true motherhood toward souls who are to be led to Christ. For this community constitutes an effective instrument by which the path to Christ and to His Church is pointed out and made smooth for unbelievers, and by which the faithful are aroused, nourished, and strengthened for spiritual combat.

In building the Christian community, priests are never to put themselves at the service of any ideology or human faction. Rather, as heralds of the gospel and shepherds of the Church, they must devote themselves to the spiritual growth of the Body of Christ.

II. *Priests as Related to Others*

7. All priests together with bishops, so share in one and the same priesthood and ministry of Christ that the very unity of their consecration and mission requires their hierarchical communion with the order of bishops.³² At times they express this communion in a most excellent manner by liturgical concelebration. At every Mass, however, they openly acknowledge that they celebrate the Eucharistic Action in union with the episcopate.³³ Therefore by reason of the gift of the Holy Spirit which is given to priests in sacred ordination, bishops should regard them as necessary helpers and counselors in the ministry and in the task of teaching, sanctifying, and nourishing the People of God.³⁴

Already in the ancient days of the Church we find liturgical texts proclaiming this relationship with insistence, as when they solemnly called upon God to pour out upon the candidate for priestly ordination “the spirit of grace and counsel so that with a pure heart he may help and govern the People [of God]”,³⁵ just as in the desert the spirit of Moses was extended to the minds of seventy prudent men,³⁶ “and using them as helpers, he easily governed countless multitudes among the people.”³⁷

Therefore, on account of this communion in the same priesthood and ministry, the bishop should regard priests as his brothers and friends.³⁸ As far as in him lies, he should have at heart the material and especially spiritual welfare of his priests. For above all, upon the bishop rests the heavy responsibility for the sanctity of his priests.³⁹ Hence, he should exercise the greatest care on behalf of the continual formation of his priests.⁴⁰ He should gladly listen to them, indeed, consult them, and have discussions with them about those matters which concern the necessities of pastoral work and the welfare of the diocese.

In order to put these ideals into effect, a group or senate⁴¹ of priests representing the presbytery should be established, which will operate in a manner adapted to modern circumstances and needs⁴² and have a form and norms to be determined by law. By its counsel, this body will be able to give effective assistance to the bishop in his government of the diocese.

Keeping in mind the fullness of the sacrament of orders which the bishop enjoys, priests must respect in him the authority of Christ, the chief Shepherd. They must therefore stand by their own bishop in sincere charity and obedience.⁴³ This priestly obedience animated with a spirit of cooperation is based on the very sharing in the episcopal ministry which is conferred on priests both through the sacrament of orders and the canonical mission.⁴⁴

This union of priests with their bishops is all the more necessary today since in our present age for various reasons apostolic activities are required not only to take on many forms, but to extend beyond the boundaries of one parish or diocese. Hence no

priest can in isolation or singlehandedly accomplish his mission in a satisfactory way. He can do so only by joining forces with other priests under the direction of Church authorities.

8. Established in the priestly order by ordination, all priests are united among themselves in an intimate sacramental brotherhood. In a special way they form one presbytery in a diocese to whose service they are committed under their own bishop. For even though priests are assigned to different duties they still carry on one priestly ministry on behalf of men.

All priests are sent forth as co-workers in the same undertaking, whether they are engaged in a parochial or extra-parochial ministry, whether they devote their efforts to scientific research or teaching, whether by mutual labor they share in the lot of the workers themselves—if there seems to be need for this and competent authority approves—or whether they fulfill any other apostolic tasks or labors related to the apostolate. All indeed are united in the single goal of building up Christ's Body, a work requiring manifold roles and new adjustments, especially nowadays.

Hence it is very important that all priests, whether diocesan or Religious, always help one another to be fellow workers on behalf of truth.⁴⁵ Each one therefore is united by special bonds of apostolic charity, ministry, and brotherhood with the other members of this presbytery.

This fact has been manifested from ancient times in the liturgy, when the priests present at an ordination are invited to join with the ordaining bishop in imposing hands on the new candidate, and when priests concelebrate the sacred Eucharist in unity of heart. Each and every priest, therefore, is joined to his brother priests by a bond of charity, prayer, and every kind of cooperation. In this manner, they manifest that unity with which Christ willed His own to be perfectly one, so that the world might know that the Son has been sent by the Father.⁴⁶

Consequently, older priests should receive younger priests as true brothers and give them a hand with their first undertakings and

assignments in the ministry. They should likewise try to understand the mentality of younger priests, even though it be different from their own, and should follow their projects with good will. For his part, a young priest should respect the age and experience of his seniors. He should discuss plans with them, and willingly cooperate with them in matters which pertain to the care of souls.

Inspired by a fraternal spirit, priests will not neglect hospitality,⁴⁷ but cultivate kindness and share their goods in common.⁴⁸ They will be particularly solicitous for priests who are sick, afflicted, overburdened with work, lonely, exiled from their homeland, or suffering persecution.⁴⁹ They will readily and joyfully gather together for recreation, remembering the Lord's own invitation to the weary Apostles: "Come apart into a desert place and rest a while" (Mk. 6:31).

Furthermore, in order that priests may find mutual assistance in the development of their spiritual and intellectual lives, that they may be able to cooperate more effectively in their ministry and be saved from the dangers which may arise from loneliness, let there be fostered among them some kind or other of community life. Such a life can take on several forms according to various personal or pastoral needs: for instance, a shared roof where this is feasible, or a common table, or at least frequent and regular gatherings.

Worthy too of high regard and zealous promotion are those associations whose rules have been examined by competent Church authority, and which foster priestly holiness in the exercise of the ministry through an apt and properly approved rule of life and through brotherly assistance. Thus these associations aim to be of service to the whole priestly order.

Finally, by reason of the same communion in the priesthood, priests should realize that they have special obligations toward priests who labor under certain difficulties. They should give them timely help and also, if necessary, admonish them prudently. Moreover, they should always treat with fraternal charity and magnanimity those who have failed in some way, offering urgent prayers to God for them and continually showing themselves to be true brothers and friends.

9. In virtue of the sacrament of orders, priests of the New Testament exercise the most excellent and necessary office of father and teacher among the People of God and for them. They are nevertheless, together with all of Christ's faithful, disciples of the Lord, made sharers in His Kingdom by the grace of God who calls them.⁵⁰ For priests are brothers among brothers⁵¹ with all those who have been reborn at the baptismal font. They are all members of one and the same Body of Christ, whose upbuilding is entrusted to all.⁵²

Priests therefore should preside in such a way that they seek the things of Jesus Christ,⁵³ not the things which are their own. They must work together with the lay faithful and conduct themselves in their midst after the example of their Master, who among men "has not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mt. 20:28).

Priests must sincerely acknowledge and promote the dignity of the laity and the role which is proper to them in the mission of the Church. They should scrupulously honor that just freedom which is due to everyone in this earthly city. They should listen to the laity willingly, consider their wishes in a fraternal spirit, and recognize their experience and competence in the different areas of human activity, so that together with them they will be able to read the signs of the times.

While testing spirits to see if they be of God,⁵⁴ priests should discover with the instinct of faith, acknowledge with joy, and foster with diligence the various humble and exalted charisms of the laity. Among the other gifts of God which are found in abundance among the faithful, those are worthy of special attention which are drawing many to a deeper spiritual life. Priests should also confidently entrust to the laity duties in the service of the Church, allowing them freedom and room for action. In fact, on suitable occasions, they should invite them to undertake works on their own initiative.⁵⁵

Finally, priests have been placed in the midst of the laity to lead them to the unity of charity, that they may "love one another with fraternal charity, anticipating one another with honor" (Rom.

12:10). It is their task, therefore, to reconcile differences of mentality in such a way that no one will feel himself a stranger in the community of the faithful. Priests are defenders of the common good, with which they are charged in the name of the bishop. At the same time, they are strenuous defenders of the truth, lest the faithful be tossed about by every wind of opinion.⁵⁶ To their special concern are committed those who have fallen away from the use of the sacraments, or perhaps even from the faith. As good shepherds, they should not cease from going after them.

Mindful of this Council's directives on ecumenism,⁵⁷ let them not forget their brothers who do not enjoy full ecclesiastical communion with us.

Finally, to them are commended all those who do not recognize Christ as their Saviour.

The Christian faithful, for their part, should realize their obligations toward their priests and with filial love they should follow them as their shepherds and fathers. Likewise sharing their cares, they should help their priests by prayer and work to the extent possible, so that their priests can more readily overcome difficulties and be able to fulfill their duties more fruitfully.⁵⁸

III. *The Distribution of Priests and Priestly Vocations*

10. The spiritual gift which priests received at their ordination prepares them not for any limited and narrow mission but for the widest scope of the universal mission of salvation "even to the very ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). For every priestly ministry shares in the universality of the mission entrusted by Christ to His Apostles. The priesthood of Christ, in which all priests truly share, is necessarily intended for all peoples and all times. It is bound by no limits of blood, nationality, or time, a fact already mysteriously prefigured in the person of Melchisedech.⁵⁹

Let priests remember then, that they must have at heart the care of all the churches. Hence priests belonging to dioceses which are rich in vocations should show themselves willing and ready,

with the permission or at the urging of their own bishop, to exercise their ministry in other regions, missions, or activities which suffer from a shortage of clergy.

In addition, the norms of incardination and excardination should be so revised that while this ancient practice remains intact it will better correspond to today's pastoral needs.

Where an apostolic consideration truly requires it, easier procedures should be devised not only for the appropriate distribution of priests, but for special pastoral objectives on behalf of diverse social groups, whether these goals are to be achieved in a given area, a nation, or anywhere on earth.

To these ends, therefore, there can be usefully established certain international seminaries, special dioceses, or personal prelatures and other agencies of this sort. In a manner to be decreed for each individual undertaking, and without prejudice to the rights of local Ordinaries, priests can thereby be assigned or incardinated for the general good of the whole Church.

As far as possible, priests should not be sent singly to a new field of labor, especially to one in whose language and customs they are not yet well versed. Rather, after the example of the disciples of Christ,⁶⁰ they should be sent in at least twos or threes so that they may be mutually helpful to one another. Likewise, thoughtful care should be given to their spiritual life as well as their mental and bodily strength. As far as possible the locale and circumstances of work should be adapted to the personal situation of each priest assigned.

At the same time it will be highly advantageous if those priests who seek to work in a nation new to them take care not only to know well the language of that place but also the psychological and social characteristics peculiar to the people they wish to serve in humility. Thus they will be able to communicate with them as successfully as possible and thereby imitate St. Paul, who could say of himself: "For, free though I was as to all, unto all I have made myself a slave that I might gain the more converts. And I have become to the Jews a Jew that I might gain the Jews" (1 Cor. 9:19-20).

11. The Shepherd and Bishop of our souls ⁶¹ so constituted His Church that the people whom He chose and purchased by His blood ⁶² would be due to have its priests always and to the end of time, lest Christians should ever be like sheep without a shepherd.⁶³ Acknowledging Christ's desire and inspired by the Holy Spirit, the Apostles considered it their duty to select ministers "who shall be competent in turn to teach others" (2 Tim. 2:2). This duty then is a part of the priestly mission by which every priest is made a partaker in the care of the whole Church, so that workers may never be lacking for the People of God on earth.

Since, however, "a common concern unites the captain of a ship with its passengers," ⁶⁴ the whole Christian people should be taught that it is their duty to cooperate in one way or another, by constant prayer and other means at their disposal,⁶⁵ so that the Church may always have the necessary number of priests to carry out her divine mission. In the first place, therefore, by the ministry of the Word and by the personal testimony of a life radiant with the spirit of service and true pascal joy, priests should have it dearly at heart to demonstrate to the faithful the excellence and necessity of the priesthood.

Sparing neither care nor inconvenience, let priests assist those young men or adults whom they prudently judge to be fit for so great a ministry, that they may prepare themselves properly and then at last with full external and internal freedom be able to be called by the bishop. In this effort, careful and prudent spiritual direction is of the greatest value.

Parents and teachers and all who are in any way engaged in the education of boys and young men should so prepare them that, recognizing the Lord's concern for His flock and considering the needs of the Church, they will be ready to respond generously to our Lord if He should call, and will say with the prophet: "Lo, here am I, send me" (Is. 6:8).

This voice of the Lord in summons, however, is never to be looked for as something which will be heard by the ears of future priests in any extraordinary manner. It is rather to be detected

and weighed in the signs by which the will of God is customarily made known to prudent Christians. These indications should be carefully noted by priests.⁶⁶

Vocational projects, therefore, whether diocesan or national, are warmly recommended to priests.⁶⁷ In sermons, in catechetical instructions, and in written articles, priests should eloquently set forth the needs of the Church, both local and universal, putting into vivid light the nature and excellence of the priestly ministry. In this ministry, weighty responsibilities are mixed with profound joys. In it especially, as the Fathers of the Church teach, a supreme testimony of love can be given to Christ.⁶⁸

CHAPTER III

THE LIFE OF PRIESTS

I. *The Priestly Call to Perfection*

12. By the sacrament of orders priests are configured to Christ the Priest so that as ministers of the Head and co-workers of the episcopal order they can build up and establish his whole Body which is the Church. Already indeed, in the consecration of Baptism, like all Christians, they received the sign and the gift of so lofty a vocation and a grace that even despite human weakness¹ they can and must pursue perfection according to the Lord's words: "You therefore are to be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt. 5:48).

To the acquisition of this perfection priests are bound by a special claim, since they have been consecrated to God in a new way by the reception of orders. They have become living instruments of Christ the eternal Priest, so that through the ages they can accomplish His wonderful work of reuniting the whole society of men with heavenly power.² Therefore, since every priest in his own way represents the person of Christ Himself, he is also enriched with special grace. Thus, serving the people committed to him and the entire People of God, he can more properly imitate the perfection of Him whose part he takes. Thus, too, the weakness of human flesh can be healed by the holiness of Him who has become for our sake a high priest "holy, innocent, undefiled, set apart from sinners" (Heb. 7:26).

Christ, whom the Father sanctified and consecrated, and sent into the world³ "gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and cleanse for himself an acceptable people,

pursuing good works” (Tit. 2:14). Thus He entered into His glory through His Passion.⁴ Likewise, consecrated by the anointing of the Holy Spirit and sent by Christ, priests mortify in themselves the deeds of the flesh and devote themselves entirely to the service of men. Thus they can grow in the sanctity with which they are endowed in Christ, to the point of perfect manhood.⁵

And so it is that they are grounded in the life of the Spirit while they exercise the ministry of the Spirit and of justice,⁶ as long as they are docile to Christ’s Spirit, who vivifies and leads them. For by their everyday sacred actions themselves, as by the entire ministry which they exercise in union with the bishop and their fellow priests, they are being directed toward perfection of life.

Priestly holiness itself contributes very greatly to a fruitful fulfillment of the priestly ministry. True, the grace of God can complete the work of salvation even through unworthy ministers. Yet ordinarily God desires to manifest His wonders through those who have been made particularly docile to the impulse and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Because of their intimate union with Christ and their holiness of life, these men can say with the Apostle: “It is now no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me” (Gal. 2:20).

This most holy Synod desires to achieve its pastoral goals of renewal within the Church, the spread of the gospel throughout the world, and a dialogue with the modern world. Therefore it fervently exhorts all priests to use the appropriate means endorsed by the Church⁷ as they ever strive for that greater sanctity which will make them increasingly useful instruments in the service of all of God’s People.

13. Priests will attain sanctity in a manner proper to them if they exercise their offices sincerely and tirelessly in the Spirit of Christ.

Since they are ministers of God’s Word, they should every day read and listen to that Word which they are required to teach to

others. If they are at the same time preoccupied with welcoming this message into their own hearts, they will become ever more perfect disciples of the Lord. For as the Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy: "Meditate on these things, give thyself entirely to them, that thy progress may be manifest to all. Take heed to thyself and to thy teaching, be earnest in them. For in so doing thou wilt save both thyself and those who hear thee" (1 Tim. 4:15-16).

As priests search for a better way to share with others the fruits of their own contemplation,⁸ they will win a deeper understanding of "the unfathomable riches of Christ" (Eph. 3:8) as well as the manifold wisdom of God.⁹ Remembering that it is the Lord who opens hearts¹⁰ and that sublime utterance comes not from themselves but from God's power,¹¹ in the very act of preaching His Word they will be united more closely with Christ the Teacher and be led by His Spirit. Thus joined to Christ, they will share in God's love, whose mystery, hidden for ages,¹² has been revealed in Christ.

As ministers of sacred realities, especially in the Sacrifice of the Mass, priests represent the person of Christ in a special way. He gave Himself as a victim to make men holy. Hence priests are invited to imitate the realities they deal with. Since they celebrate the mystery of the Lord's death, they should see to it that every part of their being is dead to evil habits and desires.¹³ Priests fulfill their chief duty in the mystery of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. In it the work of our redemption continues to be carried out.¹⁴ For this reason, priests are strongly urged to celebrate Mass every day, for even if the faithful are unable to be present, it is an act of Christ and the Church.¹⁵

So it is that while priests are uniting themselves with the act of Christ the Priest, they are offering their whole selves every day to God. While being nourished by the Body of Christ, their hearts are sharing in the love of Him who gives Himself as food for His faithful ones.

In a similar way, they are joined with the intention and love of Christ when they administer the sacraments. Such is especially

the case when they show themselves entirely and always ready to perform the office of the sacrament of Penance as often as the faithful reasonably request it. By reciting the Divine Office, they lend their voice to the Church as in the name of all humanity she perseveres in prayer along with Christ, who "lives always to make intercession for us" (Heb. 7:25).

Guiding and nourishing God's People, they are inspired by the love of the Good Shepherd to give their lives for their sheep.¹⁶ They are ready to make the supreme sacrifice, following the example of those priests who even in our time have not refused to lay down their lives.

Since they are teachers in the faith, they themselves "are free to enter the Holies in virtue of the blood of Christ" (Heb. 10:19) and approach God "with a true heart in fullness of faith" (Heb. 10:22). They can build up a firm hope concerning their people.¹⁷ Those who are in any distress they can console with the encouragement by which God encourages them.¹⁸

As rulers of the community, they should cultivate the asceticism proper to a pastor of souls, renouncing their own conveniences, seeking what is profitable for the many and not for themselves, so that the many may be saved.¹⁹ They are always going to greater lengths to fulfill their pastoral duties more adequately. Where there is need, they are ready to undertake new pastoral approaches under the lead of the loving Spirit who breathes where He will.²⁰

14. In today's world men have so many obligations to fulfill. There is, too, such a great diversity of problems vexing them, and often enough, they have to attend to them hastily. As a result they are sometimes in danger of scattering their energies in many directions.

For their part, priests, who are already involved in and distracted by the very numerous duties of their office, cannot without anxiety seek for a way which will enable them to unify their interior lives with their program of external activities. However much they may contribute to foster it, no merely external arrange-

ment of the works of the ministry, no mere practice of religious exercises can bring about this unity of life. But priests can truly build up this unity by imitating Christ the Lord in the fulfillment of their ministry. His food was to do the will of Him who sent Him to accomplish His work.²¹

In very fact Christ works through His ministers to achieve unceasingly in the world that same will of the Father by means of the Church. Hence Christ forever remains the source and origin of their unity of life. Therefore priests attain to the unity of their lives by uniting themselves with Christ in acknowledging the Father's will and in the gift of themselves on behalf of the flock committed to them.²²

Thus, by assuming the role of the Good Shepherd, they will find in the very exercise of pastoral love the bond of priestly perfection which will unify their lives and activities. This pastoral love²³ flows mainly from the Eucharistic Sacrifice, which is therefore the center and root of the whole priestly life. The priestly soul strives thereby to apply to itself the action which takes place on the altar of sacrifice. But this goal cannot be achieved unless priests themselves penetrate ever more deeply through prayer into the mystery of Christ.

That they may be able to verify the unity of their lives in concrete situations too, they should subject all their undertakings to the test of God's will,²⁴ which requires that projects should conform to the laws of the Church's evangelical mission. For loyalty towards Christ can never be divorced from loyalty towards His Church.

Hence pastoral love requires that a priest always work in the bond of communion with the bishop and with his brother priests, lest his efforts be in vain.²⁵ If he act in this way, a priest will find the unity of his own life in the very unity of the Church's mission. Thus he will be joined with the Lord, and through Him with the Father in the Holy Spirit. Thus he will be able to be full of consolation and to overflow with joy.²⁶

II. *Special Spiritual Needs of the Priestly Life*

15. Among the virtues most necessary for the priestly ministry must be named that disposition of soul by which they are always ready to seek not their own will, but the will of Him who sent them.²⁷ For the divine work which the Holy Spirit has raised them up²⁸ to fulfill transcends all human energies and human wisdom: “. . . the foolish things of the world has God chosen to put to shame the ‘wise’ ” (1 Cor. 1:27).

Therefore, conscious of his own weakness, the true minister of Christ labors in humility, testing what is God’s will.²⁹ In a kind of captivity to the Spirit³⁰ he is led in all things by the will of Him who wishes all men to be saved. He can detect and pursue this will in the circumstances of daily life by humbly serving all those who are entrusted to him by God through the office assigned to him and through the various happenings of his life.

Since the priestly ministry is the ministry of the Church herself, it can be discharged only by hierarchical communion with the whole body. Therefore pastoral love demands that acting in this communion, priests dedicate their own wills through obedience to the service of God and their brothers. This love requires that they accept and carry out in a spirit of faith whatever is commanded or recommended by the Sovereign Pontiff, their own bishop, or other superiors.

Let them very gladly spend themselves and be spent³¹ in any task assigned to them, even the more lowly and poor ones. For in this way they will preserve and strengthen the necessary unity with their brothers in the ministry, most of all with those whom the Lord has appointed the visible rulers of His Church. Thus too they will work to build up Christ’s Body, which grows “through every joint of the system.”³²

This obedience leads to the more mature freedom of God’s sons. Of its nature it demands that in the fulfillment of their duty priests lovingly and prudently look for new avenues for the greater good of the Church. At the same time, it demands that they con-

fidently propose their plans and urgently expose the needs of the flock committed to them, while remaining ready to submit to the judgment of those who exercise the chief responsibility for governing the Church of God.

By such responsible and voluntary humility and obedience, priests liken themselves to Christ, having in themselves the attitude which was in Christ Jesus, who “emptied himself, taking the nature of a slave . . . becoming obedient to death” (Phil. 2:7-9). By such obedience Christ overcame and redeemed the disobedience of Adam. For as the Apostle gave witness: “By the disobedience of the one man the many were constituted sinners, so also by the obedience of the one the many will be constituted just” (Rom. 5:19).

16. With respect to the priestly life, the Church has always held in especially high regard perfect and perpetual continence³³ on behalf of the Kingdom of Heaven. Such continence was recommended by Christ the Lord and has been gladly embraced and praiseworthy observed down through the years and in our day too by many Christians. For it simultaneously signifies and stimulates pastoral charity and is a special fountain of spiritual fruitfulness on earth.³⁴ It is not, indeed, demanded by the very nature of the priesthood, as is evident from the practice of the primitive Church³⁵ and from the tradition of the Eastern Churches. In these Churches, in addition to all bishops and those others who by a gift of grace choose to observe celibacy, there also exist married priests of outstanding merit.

While this most sacred Synod recommends ecclesiastical celibacy, it in no way intends to change that different discipline which lawfully prevails in Eastern Churches. It lovingly exhorts all those who have received the priesthood after marriage to persevere in their sacred vocation, and to continue to spend their lives fully and generously for the flock committed to them.³⁶

Celibacy accords with the priesthood on many scores. For the whole priestly mission is dedicated to that new humanity which Christ, the conqueror of death, raises up in the world through His

Spirit. This humanity takes its origin "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (Jn. 1:13). Through virginity or celibacy observed for the sake of the Kingdom of heaven,³⁷ priests are consecrated to Christ in a new and distinguished way. They more easily hold fast to Him with undivided heart.³⁸ They more freely devote themselves in Him and through Him to the service of God and men. They more readily minister to His Kingdom and to the work of heavenly regeneration, and thus become more apt to exercise paternity in Christ, and do so to a greater extent.

Hence in this way they profess before men that they desire to dedicate themselves in an undivided way to the task assigned to them, namely, to betroth the faithful to one man, and present them as a pure virgin to Christ.³⁹ They thereby evoke that mysterious marriage which was established by God and will be fully manifested in the future, and by which the Church has Christ as her only spouse.⁴⁰ Moreover, they become a vivid sign of that future world which is already present through faith and charity, and in which the children of the resurrection will neither marry nor take wives.⁴¹

For these reasons, which are based on the mystery of the Church and her mission, celibacy was at first recommended to priests. Then, in the Latin Church, it was imposed by law on all who were to be promoted to sacred orders. This legislation, to the extent that it concerns those who are destined for the priesthood, this most holy Synod again approves and confirms. It trusts in the Spirit that the gift of celibacy, which so befits the priesthood of the New Testament, will be generously bestowed by the Father, as long as those who share in Christ's priesthood through the sacrament of orders, and indeed the whole Church, humbly and earnestly pray for it.

This holy Synod likewise exhorts all priests who, trusting in God's grace, have freely undertaken sacred celibacy in imitation of Christ to hold fast to it magnanimously and wholeheartedly. May they persevere faithfully in this state, and recognize this sur-

passing gift which the Father has given them, and which the Lord praised so openly.⁴² Let them keep in mind the great mysteries which are signified and fulfilled in it.

Many men today call perfect continence impossible. The more they do so, the more humbly and perseveringly priests should join with the Church in praying for the grace of fidelity. It is never denied to those who ask. At the same time let priests make use of all the supernatural and natural helps which are available to all. Let them not neglect to follow the norms, especially the ascetical ones which have been tested by the experience of the Church and which are by no means less necessary in today's world. And so this most holy Synod beseeches not only priests, but all the faithful to have at heart this precious gift of priestly celibacy. Let all beg of God that He may always lavish this gift on His Church abundantly.

17. By friendly and fraternal dealings among themselves and with other men, priests can learn to cultivate human values and to esteem created goods as gifts of God. Still as they go about in this world they should always realize that according to the word of our Lord and Master they are not of this world.⁴³ Therefore, using the world as though they used it not,⁴⁴ they will attain to that liberty which will free them from all excessive concern and make them docile to the divine voice which makes itself heard in everyday life.

From this freedom and docility will grow a spiritual discernment through which a proper relationship to the world and its goods will be worked out. Such a relationship is highly important for priests, since the Church's mission is fulfilled in the midst of the world and since created goods are altogether necessary for the personal development of a man. Let him therefore be grateful for everything which the heavenly Father gives them for leading their lives properly. Nevertheless they ought to evaluate in the light of faith everything which comes their way. Thus they can be led to a right use of goods corresponding to God's will, and can reject whatever would be harmful to their mission.

The Lord is “the portion and the inheritance” (Num. 18:20) of priests. Hence they should use temporal goods only for those purposes to which it is permissible to direct them according to the teaching of Christ the Lord and the regulations of the Church.

With all possible help from experienced laymen, priests should manage those goods which are, strictly speaking, ecclesiastical as the norms of Church law and the nature of the goods require. They should always direct them toward the goals in pursuit of which it is lawful for the Church to possess temporal goods. Such are: the arrangement of divine worship, the procuring of an honest living for the clergy, and the exercise of works of the sacred apostolate or of charity, especially toward the needy.⁴⁵

Without prejudice to particular law,⁴⁶ the benefits which they receive when they exercise some church office, priests and bishops should devote primarily to their decent livelihood and to the fulfillment of the duties of their proper state. What remains beyond that they should devote to the good of the Church or to works of charity. Therefore they should not regard an ecclesiastical office as a source of profit, nor should they spend the revenue accruing to it for the advantage of their own families.⁴⁷ Hence by never attaching their hearts to riches,⁴⁸ priests will always avoid any greediness and carefully abstain from any appearance of merchandising.

Indeed, they are invited to embrace voluntary poverty. By it they will be more clearly likened to Christ and will become more devoted to the sacred ministry. For Christ became poor for our sakes, whereas He had been rich, so that we might be enriched by His poverty.⁴⁹ By their own example the Apostles gave witness that God’s free gift must be freely given.⁵⁰ They knew how to abound and how to suffer want.⁵¹

After the example of that communion of goods which was praised in the history of the primitive Church,⁵² some common use of things can pave the way to pastoral charity in an excellent manner. Through this form of living, priests can laudably reduce to practice the spirit of poverty recommended by Christ.

Led, therefore, by the Lord's Spirit, who anointed the Saviour and sent Him to preach the gospel to the poor,⁵³ priests as well as bishops will avoid all those things which can offend the poor in any way. More than the other followers of Christ, priests and bishops should spurn any type of vanity in their affairs.

Finally, let them have the kind of dwelling which will appear closed to no one and which no one will fear to visit, even the humblest.

III. *The Means of Support for Priestly Life*

18. That priests may be able to foster union with Christ in all the circumstances of life, they enjoy, in addition to the conscious exercise of their ministry, those means, common and particular, new and old, which the Spirit of God never ceases to stir up in the People of God and which the Church commends and indeed at times commands for the sanctification of her members.⁵⁴ Of all spiritual helps, those acts are outstanding by which the faithful receive nourishment from God's Word at the twofold table of sacred Scripture and the Eucharist.⁵⁵ It is obvious how important for the proper sanctification of priests is the energetic and frequent exercise of such acts.

To Christ the Saviour and Shepherd, ministers of sacramental grace are intimately united through the fruitful reception of the sacraments, especially the repeated sacramental act of penance. For this sacrament, prepared for by a daily examination of conscience, greatly fosters the necessary turning of the heart toward the love of the Father of mercies. With the light of a faith nourished by spiritual reading, priests can carefully detect the signs of God's will and the impulses of His grace in the various happenings of life, and thus can become more docile day by day to the mission they have undertaken in the Holy Spirit.

They can always find a wondrous model of such docility in the Blessed Virgin Mary. Led by the Holy Spirit, she devoted herself entirely to the mystery of man's redemption.⁵⁶ With the devotion and veneration of sons, priests should lovingly honor this mother

of the supreme and eternal Priest, this Queen of the Apostles and protectress of their ministry.

That they may discharge their ministry with fidelity, they should prize daily conversation with Christ the Lord in visits of personal devotion to the most Holy Eucharist. They should gladly undertake spiritual retreats and highly esteem spiritual direction. In manifold ways, especially through approved methods of mental prayer and various voluntary forms of prayer, priests should search for and earnestly beg of God that Spirit of genuine adoration by which they themselves, along with the people entrusted to them, can unite themselves intimately with Christ the Mediator of the New Testament. Thus, as sons of adoption, they will be able to cry out: "Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15).

19. In the sacred rite of ordination the bishop admonishes priests to be "mature in knowledge", and to make their doctrine "a spiritual medicine for God's People".⁵⁷ The knowledge of a sacred minister should be sacred, since it is drawn from a sacred fountain and is directed to a sacred goal. Hence that knowledge should be drawn primarily from reading and meditating on the sacred Scriptures.⁵⁸ But it should also be fruitfully nourished by a study of the Holy Fathers and Doctors and other annals of tradition.

In addition, that they may be able to provide proper answers to the questions discussed by the men of this age, priests should be well acquainted with the documents of the Church's teaching authority and especially of Councils and the Roman Pontiffs. They should consult, too, the best approved writers in theological science.

Since in our times human culture and the sacred sciences are making new advances, priests are urged to develop their knowledge of divine and human affairs aptly and uninterruptedly. In this way they will prepare themselves more appropriately to undertake discussions with their contemporaries.

That priests may more easily pursue their studies and learn methods of evangelization and of the apostolate to better effect,

every care should be taken to provide them with opportune aids. Such would be the instituting of courses or of congresses, according to the conditions of each region, the establishment of centers dedicated to pastoral studies, the setting up of libraries, and fitting programs of study conducted by suitable persons.

Bishops, moreover, as individuals or jointly, should consider working out some easier way for their priests to attend courses giving them the opportunity to acquire a better grasp of pastoral methods and theological science, to strengthen their spiritual lives, and to share their apostolic experiences with their brothers.⁵⁹ Such courses should be held at set times, especially a few years after ordination.⁶⁰ By these and other appropriate helps newly appointed pastors and those who are assigned to a new pastoral activity can be assisted with special care. The same is true of those who are sent to another diocese or country.

Finally, bishops must be concerned that some persons dedicate themselves to a more profound knowledge of theological matters. Thus there will never be any lack of suitable teachers to train clerics, and the rest of the clergy as well as the faithful can be assisted in providing themselves with the needed teaching. Thus too will be fostered that wholesome advancement in the sacred disciplines which is altogether necessary for the Church.

20. Dedicated to serving God through the discharge of the task assigned to them, priests are worthy of receiving a just recompense. For, "the laborer deserves his wages" (Lk. 10:7),⁶¹ and "the Lord directed that those who preach the gospel should have their living from the gospel" (I Cor. 9:14). Hence, where a fitting recompense of priests is not otherwise provided for, the faithful themselves are bound by a genuine obligation to see that the needed means can be procured for them to lead a respectable and worthy life. For it is in behalf of the welfare of the faithful that they labor.

Bishops are obliged to remind the faithful of their duty. They should see to it either individually for their own dioceses or, better, through several bishops acting simultaneously for a common terri-

tory, that norms are set up by which a decent upkeep can be duly provided for those who perform some function in the service of God's People, or have done so.

Depending on the nature of the office itself and the conditions of place and time, the recompense should be fundamentally the same for all those operating in the same circumstances. It should be adjusted to their situation and should also allow them to make a suitable return to those who dedicate themselves to the service of priests. It should also enable them to give some kind of personal assistance to the needy. From her earliest beginnings the Church has always held this ministry toward the poor in high regard.

Moreover, this recompense should be such as to allow priests a requisite and sufficient vacation each year. Bishops should see to it that priests can have a vacation of this sort.

The chief emphasis should be given to the office which sacred ministers fulfill. Hence the so-called benefice system should be abandoned or at least it should be reformed in such a way that the beneficiary aspect, that is, the right to revenues accruing to an endowed office, will be treated as secondary, and the main consideration in law will be accorded to the ecclesiastical office itself. From now on such an office should be understood as any function which has been permanently assigned and is to be exercised for a spiritual purpose.

21. The example should never be overlooked of the believers in the primitive Church at Jerusalem. There "they had all things in common" (Acts 4:32) and "distribution was made to each, according as anyone had need" (Acts 4:35). Accordingly it is supremely appropriate that at least in areas where clerical support depends entirely or largely on the offerings of the faithful, some kind of diocesan agency should collect the offerings made for this purpose. The bishop is to administer it with the help of delegated priests and, where it may be useful, laymen skilled in economic affairs.

It is also desirable, to the extent possible, that in individual dioceses or regions a common fund be established out of which

bishops can satisfy different obligations to persons serving the Church, and to meet various diocesan needs. Through it, also, wealthier dioceses can help poorer ones, providing for the wants of the latter out of their abundance.⁶² This common fund should be drawn primarily from the offerings of the faithful, but can derive from other sources too, as determined by law.

In some nations social security is not yet properly organized toward the support of the clergy. In such place episcopal conferences should see to it that under the vigilance of the hierarchy sufficient provision be made for an appropriate program of preventive medicine, and so-called health benefits, and for the necessary support of priests burdened by infirmity, ill-health or old age. To this end there can be set up diocesan programs—and these can be amalgamated—or programs simultaneously instituted for various dioceses, or associations initiated for a whole territory. In any case, pertinent ecclesiastical and civil laws should always be taken into account.

Motivated by a spirit of solidarity with their brothers and sharing in their trials,⁶³ priests should support these arrangements after they have been established. At the same time they should consider that they can thereby give themselves over entirely to the welfare of souls and practice poverty in a readier evangelical sense without anxiety about their future. Let those concerned be pre-occupied that such associations in various nations be interrelated. In this way they can gain strength more surely and be more widely established.

CONCLUSION AND EXHORTATION

22. While contemplating the joys of priestly life, this most holy Synod cannot overlook the difficulties which priests experience in the circumstances of contemporary life. For it realizes how deeply economic and social conditions and even the customs of men are being transformed, and how profoundly scales of value are being changed in the estimation of man.

As a result, the ministers of the Church and even, at times, the faithful themselves feel like strangers in this world, anxiously looking for appropriate ways and words with which to communicate with it. For the modern obstacles blocking faith, the seeming sterility of their past labors, and also the bitter loneliness they experience can lead them to the danger of becoming depressed in spirit.

The world which is entrusted today to the loving ministry of the pastors of the Church is that world which God so loved that He gave His only Son for it.¹ The truth is that though entangled indeed in many sins this world is also endowed with great talents and provides the Church with the living stones² to be built up into the dwelling place of God in the Spirit.³ Impelling the Church to open new avenues of approach to the world of today, this same Holy Spirit is suggesting and fostering fitting adaptations in the ministry of priests.

Priests should remember that in performing their tasks they are never alone. Relying on the power of Almighty God and believing in Christ who called them to share in His priesthood, they should devote themselves to their ministry with complete trust knowing that God can intensify in them the ability to love.⁴

Let them be mindful too that they have as partners their brothers in the priesthood and indeed the faithful of the entire

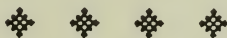
world. For all priests cooperate in carrying out the saving plan of God. This plan is the mystery of Christ, the sacrament hidden from the ages in God.⁵ It is brought to fulfillment only by degrees, through the collaboration of many ministries in the upbuilding of Christ's Body until the full measure of His manhood is achieved.

Since all of these realities are hidden with Christ in God⁶ they can be best grasped by faith. For the leaders of the People of God must walk by faith, following the example of the faithful Abraham, who in faith "obeyed by going out into a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out not knowing where he was going" (Heb. 11:8). The dispenser of the mysteries of God can be truly compared to the man who sowed his field and of whom the Lord said: "Then he slept and rose, night and day. And the seed sprouted and grew without his knowing it" (Mk. 4:27).

As for the rest, the Lord Jesus who said: "Take courage, I have overcome the world" (Jn. 16:33), did not by these words promise His Church a perfect victory in this world.

This most holy Synod truly rejoices that the earth has been sown with the seed of the gospel and now bears fruit in many places under the influence of the Lord's Spirit. He it is who fills the whole earth and has stirred up a true missionary spirit in the hearts of many priests and faithful. For all of these blessings, this most holy Synod gives most loving thanks to all the priests of the world.

"Now to him who is able to accomplish all things in a measure far beyond what we ask or conceive, in keeping with the power that is at work in us—to him the glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 3:20-21).



Each and every one of the things set forth in this Decree has won the consent of the Fathers of this most sacred Council. We too, by the Apostolic authority conferred on us by Christ, join with the Venerable Fathers in approving, decreeing and establishing these things in the Holy Spirit, and we direct that what has thus been enacted in synod be published to God's glory.

Rome, at St. Peter's, December 7, 1965

I, PAUL, Bishop of the Catholic Church

There follow the signatures of the Fathers.

NOTES

Preface

¹ Second Vatican Council, *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, Dec. 4, 1963: AAS 56 (1964), p. 97 ff.; Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* Nov. 21, 1964: AAS 57 (1965) p. 5 ff.; Decree *Christus Dominus* on Pastoral Duties of Bishops, Oct. 28, 1965; Decree on Priestly Training, Oct. 28, 1965.

Chapter I

¹ Cf. Matt. 3:16; Luke 4:18; Acts 4:27; 10:38.

² Cf. 1 Pet. 2:5 and 9.

³ Cf. 1 Pet. 3:15.

⁴ Cf. Apoc. 19:10; Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, Nov. 21, 1964, n. 35: AAS 57 (1965) p. 40-41.

⁵ Council of Trent, 23rd session, chapter 1, canon 1: Denzinger 957 and 961 (1764 and 1771).

⁶ Cf. John 20:21; Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, Nov. 21, 1964, n. 18: AAS 57 (1965) p. 21-22.

⁷ Cf. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, Nov. 21, 1964, n. 22: AAS 57 (1965), p. 33-36.

⁸ Cf. *ibid.*

⁹ Cf. Roman Pontifical "Ordination of a priest," preface. These words are already found in the Verona Sacramentary (ed. L.C. Moehlberg, Rome 1956, p. 122); also in Frankish Missal (ed. L.C. Moehlberg, Rome 1957, p. 9) and in the Book of Sacramentaries of the Roman Church (ed. L.C. Moehlberg, Rome 1960, p. 25) and Roman German Pontificals (ed. Vogel-Elze, Vatican City 1963, vol. 1, p. 34).

¹⁰ Cf. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, Nov. 21, 1964, n. 10: AAS 57 (1965) p. 14-15.

¹¹ Cf. Rom. 15:16 (Greek).

¹² Cf. 1 Cor. 11:26.

¹³ St. Augustine *De Civitate Dei* 10, 6: PL 41, 284.

¹⁴ Cf. 1 Cor. 15:24.

¹⁵ Cf. Hebrews 5:1.

¹⁶ Cf. Hebrews 2:17; 4:15.

¹⁷ Cf. 1 Cor. 9:19-23 (Vg.).

¹⁸ Cf. Acts 13:2.

¹⁹ Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Ecclesiam Suam*, Aug. 6, 1964: AAS 56 (1964), p. 627 and 638.

²⁰ Cf. Rom. 12:2.

²¹ Cf. John 10:14-16.

²² Cf. St. Polycarp, *Epist. ad Philippenses*, 6, 1 (Ed. F.X. Funk, Apostolic Fathers, I, p. 303).

Chapter II

¹ Cf. 1 Pet. 1:23; Acts 6:7; 12:24. "(The apostles) preached the word of truth and founded Churches." (St. Augustine, *On Psalms*, 44, 23; PL 36, 508).

² Cf. Mal. 2:7; 1 Tim. 4:11-13; 1 Tim. 1:9.

³ Cf. Mark 16:16.

⁴ Cf. 2 Cor. 11:7. All that has been said regarding bishops also applies to priests inasmuch as they are cooperators of the bishops. Cf. *Statuta Ecclesiae Antiqua*, c. 3 (ed. Ch. Munier, Paris 1960, p. 79); *Decree of Gratian*,

C. 6, D. 88 (ed. Friedberg, 1,307); Council of Trent, Decree *De Reform.*, Session 5, c. 2, n. 9 (Ecumenical Council Decrees, ed. Herder, Rome 1963, p. 645); Session 24, c. 4 (p. 739); Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, Nov. 21, 1964, n. 25: AAS 57 (1965), p. 29-31.

⁵ Cf. *Constitutiones Apostolorum* II, 26, 7: "(priests) are teachers of sacred science as the Lord Himself commanded when he said: 'Going, therefore, teach,' etc." (ed. F.X. Funk, *Didascalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum*, I, Paderborn 1905, p. 105); Leonine Sacramentary and other sacramentaries up to the Roman Pontifical, preface of the ordination of priests: "By this providence, Lord, You have added to the apostles of your Son fellow teachers of the faith through whom the apostles have filled the whole world with their teaching." Ordo Book of the Mozarabic Liturgy, preface to the ordination of priests: "Teacher of peoples and ruler of subjects, he keeps intact the Catholic faith and announces true salvation to all." (ed. M. Ferotin, Paris, 1904, col. 55.)

⁶ Cf. Gal. 2:5.

⁷ Cf. 1 Pet. 2:12.

⁸ Cf. Rite of priestly ordination in the Alexandrian Jacobite Church: ". . . Gather your people to the word of doctrine like a foster-mother who nourishes her children" (H. Denzinger, *Oriental Rites*, Book II, Wurzburg 1863, p. 14).

⁹ Cf. Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16; Tertullian, *On Baptism*, 14, 2 (The Body of Christians, Latin Series, I p. 289, 11-13); St. Athanasius, *Against the Arians*, 2, 42 (PG 26, 237); St. Jerome, *On Matthew*, 28, 19 (PL 26, 218 BC): "First let them teach all nations, and then pour water on those who have learned. It cannot be that the body receive the sacrament of baptism unless the soul first has received the truth of faith"; St. Thomas, "Exposition of the first decretal," no. 1: "Sending His disciples to preach, Our Savior enjoined on them three things: first, that they teach the faith; second, that they confer the sacraments on believers . . ." (ed. Marietti, *Opuscula Theologica*, Taurini-Rome 1954, 1138).

¹⁰ Cf. Second Vatican Council, *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, Dec. 4, 1963, n. 35, 2: AAS 56 (1964), p. 109.

¹¹ Cf. *ibid.*, nn. 33, 35, 48, 52 (pp. 108-109, 113, 114).

¹² Cf. *ibid.*, n. 7 (pp. 100-101); Pius XII, Encyclical Letter *Mystici Corporis*, June 29, 1943: AAS 35 (1943), p. 230.

¹³ St. Ignatius Martyr, *Smyrn.*, 8, 1-2 (ed. F.X. Funk, p. 282, 6-15); *Constitutions of the Apostles*, VIII, 12, 3 (ed. F.X. Funk, p. 496); VIII, 29, 2 (p. 532).

¹⁴ Cf. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, Nov. 21, 1964, n. 28: AAS 57 (1965), pp. 33-36.

¹⁵ "The Eucharist indeed is a quasi consummation of the spiritual life, and the goal of all the sacraments" (St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.* III, q. 73, a. 3c); cf. *Summa Theol.* III, q. 65, a. 3.

¹⁶ Cf. St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.* III, q. 65, a. 3, ad 1; q. 79, a. 1, c, and ad 1.

¹⁷ Cf. Eph. 5:19-20.

¹⁸ Cf. St. Jerome, *Epistles*, 114, 2 (PL 22, 934). See Second Vatican Council, *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, Dec. 4, 1963, nn. 122-127: AAS 56 (1964), pp. 130-132.

¹⁹ Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Mysterium Fidei*, Sept. 3, 1965: AAS 57 (1965), p. 771.

²⁰ Cf. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, Nov. 21, 1964, n. 28: AAS 57 (1965), pp. 33-36.

²¹ Cf. 2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10.

²² Cf. Gal. 1:10.

²³ Cf. 1 Cor. 4:14.

²⁴ Cf. *Didascalia*, II, 34, 3; II, 46, 6; II, 47, 1; *Constitutions of the Apostles*, II, 47, 1 (ed. F.X. Funk, *Didascalia and Constitutions*, I, pp. 116, 142 and 143).

²⁵ Cf. Gal. 4:3; 5:1 and 13.

²⁶ Cf. St. Jerome, *Epistles*, 58:7 (PL 22, 584).

²⁷ Cf. 1 Pet. 4:10 ff.

²⁸ Cf. Matt. 25:34-45.

²⁹ Cf. Luke 4:18.

³⁰ Other categories could be named, e.g. migrants, nomads, etc. *The Decree on the Pastoral Duties of Bishops*, Oct. 28, 1965, treats of these.

³¹ Cf. *Didascalia*, II, 59, 1-3 (ed. F.X. Funk, I, p. 170); Paul VI, allocation to Italian clergy present at the 13th week-long congress at Orvieto on pastoral aggiornamento, Sept. 6, 1963: AAS 55 (1963) pp. 750 ff.

³² Cf. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, Nov. 21, 1964, n. 28: AAS 57 (1965), p. 35.

³³ Cf. cited, *Ecclesiastical Constitution of the Apostles*, XVIII: (ed. Th. Schermann, *Die allgemeine Kirchenordnung*, I, Paderborn 1914, p. 26; A. Harnack, *T. u. U.*, II, 4, p. 13, n. 18 and 19); Pseudo-Jerome, *The Seven Orders of the Church* (ed. A. W. Kalf, Würzburg 1937, p. 45); St. Isidore of Hispali, *Ecclesiastical Offices*, c. VII (PL 83, 787).

³⁴ Cf. *Didascalia*, II, 28, 4 (ed. F. X. Funk, p. 108); *Constitutions of the Apostles*, II, 28, 4; II, 34, 3 (*ibid.*, pp. 109 and 117).

³⁵ *Constitutions of the Apostles*, VIII, 16, 4 (ed. F. X. Funk, I, p. 522, 13); cf. *Epitome of the Constitutions of the Apostles*, VI (*ibid.*, II, p. 80, 3-4); *Testamentum Domini*, (transl. I. E. Rahmani, Moguntiae 1899, p. 69). Also in *Trad. Apost.* (ed. B. Botte, *La Tradition Apostolique*, Munster, i. W. 1963, p. 20).

³⁶ Cf. Num. 11:16-25.

³⁷ Roman Pontifical on the ordination of a priest, preface: these words are also found in the Leonine Sacramentary, the Gelasian Sacramentary and the Gregorian Sacramentary. Similar words can be found in the Oriental Liturgies: cf. *Trad. Apost.*: (ancient Latin version of Verona, ed. B. Botte, *La Tradition Apostolique de St. Hippolyte. Essai de reconstruction*, Munster i. W. 1963, p. 20); *Constitutions of the Apostles*, VIII, 16, 4 (ed. F. X. Funk, I, p. 522, 16-17); *Epitome on the Constitutions of the Apostles*, 6 (ed. F. X. Funk, II, p. 20, 5-7); *Testamentum Domini* (transl. I. E. Rahmani, Moguntiae 1899, p. 69); *Euchologium Serapionis*, XXVII (ed. F. X. Funk, *Didascalia and Constitutions*, II, p. 190, lines 1-7); Maronite Rite of Ordination (transl. H. Denzinger, *Rites of the Orientals*, II, Würzburg 1863, p. 161). Among the Fathers can be cited: Theodore of Mopsuestia, *On First Timothy*, 3, 8 (ed. Swete, II, pp. 119-121; Theodoretus, *Questions on Numbers*, XVIII (PG 80, 372 b).

³⁸ Cf. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, Nov. 21, 1964, n. 28: AAS 57 (1965), p. 35.

³⁹ Cf. John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Sacerdotii Nostri Primordia*, Aug. 1, 1959: AAS 51 (1959), p. 576; St. Pius X, Exhortation to the clergy *Haerent Animo*, Aug. 4, 1908: *Acts of St. Pius X*, vol. IV (1908), pp. 237 ff.

⁴⁰ Cf. Second Vatican Council, *Decree on the Pastoral Duties of Bishops*, Oct. 28, 1956, nn. 15 and 16.

⁴¹ St. Ignatius Martyr, *Magn.* 6, 1: (ed. F. X. Funk, p. 234, 10-13); St. Ignatius Martyr, *Trall.*, 3, 1: (*ibid.*, p. 244, 10-12); St. Jerome, *On Isaiah*, II, 3 (PL 24, 61 A).

⁴² The Cathedral Chapter is already found in established law, as the

“senate and assembly” of the bishop (Code of Canon Law, c. 391), or if there is not one, an assembly of diocesan consultors (cf. Code of Canon Law, cc. 423-428). It is our desire to give recognition to such institutions so that modern circumstances and necessities might better be provided for. As is evident, this synod of priests from the pastoral “consilium” is spoken of in the *Decree on the Pastoral Duties of Bishops* of Oct. 28, 1965 (n. 27), of which the laity can also be members, and whose function is mainly to map out a plan of action for pastoral work. Concerning priests as counselors of the bishops, one might refer to the *Didascalia*, II, 28, 4 (ed. F. X. Funk, I, p. 108); also *Constitutions of the Apostles*, II 28, 4 (ed. F. X. Funk, I, p. 109); St. Ignatius Martyr, *Magn.* 6, 1 (ed. F. X. Funk, p. 234, 10-16); *Trall.* 3, 1 (ed. F. X. Funk, p. 244, 10-12); Origen, *Against Celsus*, 3, 30: “Priests are counselors or ‘bouleytai’” (PG II, 957 d-960 a).

⁴³ Cf. Paul VI, allocution to the family heads of Rome and Lenten speakers, March 1, 1965, in the Sistine Hall: AAS 57 (1965), p. 326.

⁴⁴ Cf. *Constitutions of the Apostles*, VIII 47, 39: (ed. F. X. Funk, p. 577).

⁴⁵ Cf. 3 John 8.

⁴⁶ Cf. John 17:23.

⁴⁷ Cf. Hebrews 13:1-2.

⁴⁸ Cf. Hebrews 13:16.

⁴⁹ Cf. Matt. 5:10.

⁵⁰ Cf. I Thess. 2:12; Col. 1:13.

⁵¹ Cf. Matt. 23:8. Also Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Ecclesiam Suam*, Aug. 6, 1964: AAS 58 (1964), p. 647.

⁵² Cf. Eph. 4:7 and 16; *Constitutions of the Apostles*, VIII, 1, 20: (ed. F. X. Funk, I, p. 467).

⁵³ Cf. Phil. 2:21.

⁵⁴ Cf. 1 John 4:1.

⁵⁵ Cf. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, Nov. 21, 1964, n. 37: AAS 57 (1965), pp. 42-43.

⁵⁶ Cf. Eph. 4:14.

⁵⁷ Cf. Second Vatican Council, *Decree on Ecumenism*, Nov. 21, 1964: AAS 57 (1965), pp. 90 ff.

⁵⁸ Cf. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, Nov. 21, 1964, n. 37: AAS 57 (1965), pp. 42-43.

⁵⁹ Cf. Hebrews 7:3.

⁶⁰ Cf. Luke 10:1.

⁶¹ Cf. 1 Peter 2:25.

⁶² Cf. Acts 20:28.

⁶³ Cf. Matt. 9:36.

⁶⁴ Roman Pontifical, on the ordination of a priest.

⁶⁵ Cf. Second Vatican Council, *Decree on Priestly Training*, Oct. 28, 1965, n. 2.

⁶⁶ Paul VI, allocution of May 5, 1965: *L'Osservatore Romano*, May 6, 1965, p. 1.

⁶⁷ Cf. Second Vatican Council, *Decree on Priestly Training*, Oct. 28, 1965, n. 2.

⁶⁸ The Fathers teach this in their explanations of Christ's words to Peter: “Do you love me? . . . Feed my sheep.” (John 21:17); Thus St. John Chrysostom, *On the Priesthood*, II, 1-2 (PG 47-48, 633); St. Gregory the Great, *Reg. Past. Liber*, P. I. c. 5 (PL 77, 19 a).

Chapter III

¹ Cf. 2 Cor. 12:9.

² Cf. Pius XI, Encyclical Letter *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii*, Dec. 20, 1935: AAS 28 (1936) p. 10.

³ Cf. John 10:36.

⁴ Luke 24:26.

⁵ Cf. Eph. 4:13.

⁶ Cf. 2 Cor. 3:8-9.

⁷ Cf. among others:

St. Pius X, exhortation to the clergy *Haerent animo*, Aug. 4, 1908: St. Pius X, AAS 4 (1908), p. 237 ff.

Pius XI, Encyclical Letter *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii*, Dec. 20, 1935; AAS 28 (1936).

Pius XII, Apostolic Exhortation *Menti nostrae*, Sept. 23, 1950: AAS (1950), 657 ff.

John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Sacerdoti nostri primordia*, Aug. 1, 1959: AAS 51 (1959) 545 ff.

⁸ Cf. St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.* II-II, q. 188, a. 7.

⁹ Cf. Hebr. 3:9-10.

¹⁰ Cf. Acts 16:14.

¹¹ Cf. 2 Cor. 4:7.

¹² Cf. Eph. 3:9.

¹³ Cf. Roman Pontifical on the ordination of priests.

¹⁴ Cf. Roman Missal, Prayer over the Offerings of the Ninth Sunday after Pentecost.

¹⁵ Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Mysterium Fidei*, Sept. 3, 1965: AAS 57 (1965), pp. 761-762. Cf. Second Vatican Council, *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, Dec. 4, 1963, nn. 26 and 27; AAS 56 (1964), p. 107.

¹⁶ Cf. John 10:11.

¹⁷ Cf. 2 Cor. 1:7.

¹⁸ Cf. 2 Cor. 1:4.

¹⁹ Cf. 1 Cor. 10:33.

²⁰ Cf. John 3:8.

²¹ Cf. John 4:34.

²² Cf. 1 John 3:16.

²³ "May it be a duty of love to feed the Lord's flock" (St. Augustine, *tract on John*, 123, 5: PL 35, 1967).

²⁴ Cf. Rom. 12:2.

²⁵ Cf. Gal. 2:2.

²⁶ Cf. 2 Cor. 7:4.

²⁷ Cf. John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38.

²⁸ Cf. Acts 13:2.

²⁹ Cf. Eph. 5:10.

³⁰ Cf. Acts 20:22.

³¹ Cf. 2 Cor. 12:15.

³² Cf. Eph. 4:11-16.

³³ Cf. Matt. 19:22.

³⁴ Cf. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, Nov. 21, 1964, n. 42: AAS 57 (1965), p. 47-49.

³⁵ Cf. 1 Tim. 3:2-5: tit. 1, 6.

³⁶ Cf. Pius XI, Encyclical Letter *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii*, Dec. 29, 1935: AAS 28 (1936), p. 28.

³⁷ Cf. Matt. 19:12.

³⁸ Cf. 1 Cor. 7:32-34.

³⁹ Cf. 2 Cor. 11:2.

⁴⁰ Cf. Second Vatican Council Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, Nov. 21, 1964, n. 42 and 44: AAS 57 (1965), p. 47-49 and 50-51; *Decree on the Renewal of Religious Life*, Oct. 28, 1965, n. 12.

⁴¹ Cf. Luke 20:35-36; Pius XI, Encyclical Letter *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii*, Dec. 20, 1935, AAS 28 (1936) p. 24-28; Pius XII, Encyclical Letter *Sacra Virginitas*, March 25, 1954, AAS 46 (1954) p. 169-172.

⁴² Cf. Matt. 19:11.

⁴³ Cf. John 17:14-16.

⁴⁴ Cf. 1 Cor. 7:31.

⁴⁵ Council of Antioch, canon 25: Mansi 2, 1328; *Decree of Gratian*, c. 23, C. 12 q. 1. (ed. Friedberg, I, p. 684-685).

⁴⁶ This is to be understood especially with regard to the laws and customs prevailing in the Eastern Churches.

⁴⁷ Council of Paris a, 829, can 15: M.G.H. Sect. III, *Concilia*, t. 2, para 6, 622; Council of Trent, Session XXV, *De Reform.*, chapter 1.

⁴⁸ Ps. 62:11 (Vulgate 61).

⁴⁹ Cf. 2 Cor. 8:9.

⁵⁰ Cf. Acts 8:18-25.

⁵¹ Cf. Phil. 4:12.

⁵² Cf. Acts 2:42-47.

⁵³ Cf. Luke 4:18.

Chapter IV

⁵⁴ Cf. Code of Canon Law, 125 ff.

⁵⁵ Cf. Second Vatican Council, *Decree on the Renewal of Religious Life*, Oct. 28, 1965, n. 6; *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*, Nov. 18, 1965, n. 21.

⁵⁶ Cf. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, Nov. 21, 1964, n. 65: AAS 57 (1965) p. 64-65.

⁵⁷ Roman Pontifical on the ordination of priests.

⁵⁸ Cf. Second Vatican Council, *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*, Nov. 18, 1965, n. 25.

⁵⁹ Second Vatican Council, *Decree on the Pastoral Duties of Bishops*, Oct. 28, 1965, n. 16.

⁶⁰ This course is not the same as the pastoral course which is to be undertaken immediately after ordination, spoken of in the *Decree on Priestly Training*, Oct. 28, 1965, n. 22.

⁶¹ Cf. Matt. 10:10; 1 Cor. 9:7; 1 Tim. 5:18.

⁶² Cf. 2 Cor. 8:14.

⁶³ Cf. Phil. 4:14.

Conclusion and Exhortation

¹ Cf. John 3:16.

² Cf. 1 Pet. 2:5.

³ Cf. Eph. 2:22.

⁴ Cf. Roman Pontifical, on the ordination of priests.

⁵ Cf. Eph. 3:9.

⁶ Cf. Col. 3:3.

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Prepared by Joseph W. Sprug

Librarian, Loretto Heights College, Denver, Colorado

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