

PRIESTLY ORDINATIONS IN OPUS DEI

24 MAY 2025

BASILICA OF SAINT EUGENE

HOMILY OF CARDINAL ARTHUR ROCHE

PREFECT OF THE DICASTERY FOR DIVINE WORSHIP

AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS

Dear brothers and sisters,

The Church rejoices today with great joy on seeing twenty of her children come forward to offer themselves for priestly ministry in the Church. We rejoice because, in the words of Saint Paul, these men have been moved by love, having discovered the love of our Lord who died for all men and women so that they might no longer live for themselves but rather for the One who died and rose for them. And in this discovery, they have heard our Lord's invitation to follow Him and let themselves be transformed by the gift He gives them.

My dearest sons, Vincenzo Maria, Stefano, John Robert, Daniél, Ramón Alfonso, Arturo Miguel, Santiago, Ramón, Luis, José María, José Miguel, Robert, Ezequiel, Álvaro, Pedro Pablo, Santiago, Enrique, Antonio, Gonzalo, and Cristóbal, after a long discernment on your part and on the part of those who have prepared you, the Church now calls you to become priests to serve the holy people of God. I say "become" because, although I will ordain you as priests with the laying on of my hands and the prayer of ordination, you will still need to discover and develop every day the greatness of this treasure that He gives you to care for his people wherever your mission as priests leads you.

This means that you must remain close to the One who is calling you, who has touched your heart and now shares his priesthood with you. But it also requires that you draw near to those you are entrusted to care for. Every day will be for you an opportunity to make a new discovery and, in the words of St. Peter, to bear witness to everything that Jesus did in the countryside and in the city "to testify that he is the one ordained by God . . . To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name" (*Acts* 10:43).

Jesus stands before you as an example to help you understand how you must bear this witness, as a "good shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep" – a shepherd who knows his sheep by name, "as the Father knows me, and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep."

As the Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, said last Sunday, you are giving your life to the Good Shepherd and it is on Him that you will depend. It is He, the shepherd, who cares for you, who knows you not only by name but in the depths of your heart, and who gives you his life and all that you need. This is the mission He entrusts to you: to be a good shepherd for others in everything you do and to walk alongside them throughout their lives. Only in this way will others follow you.

My brothers and sisters who are accompanying your sons, brothers or friends with your presence and offer them your affection and prayer, understand well the reality of what the Holy Spirit is about to accomplish in them. They will indeed be configured to Christ, the Eternal High Priest; that is, they will be consecrated as true priests of the New Testament. In this capacity, as part of the second degree of the sacrament of Holy Orders, they will be preachers of the Gospel, shepherds of the people of God, and they will preside over acts of worship, especially in the celebration of our Lord's sacrifice.

As for you, beloved sons who are about to be raised to the order of the priesthood, consider that in exercising the priestly ministry, you will share in the mission of Christ, the only Teacher. Share with everyone the Word of God that you yourselves have received with joy. Read and meditate diligently on the Word of the Lord, in order to believe what you have read, teach what you have learned in faith, and live what you have taught. Let your teaching be nourishment for the people of God and let the good aroma of your life be joy and support for Christ's faithful, so that by your word and example, you may build up the house of God, which is the Church.

You will continue Christ's sanctifying work. Through your ministry, the spiritual sacrifice of the faithful is made perfect, for it is united to Christ's sacrifice, which through your hands, in the name of the whole Church, is offered in an unbloody manner on the altar in the celebration of the Holy Mysteries. Be truly aware, therefore, of what you do. Imitate what you celebrate, so that by participating in the mystery of our Lord's death and resurrection, you may bear Christ's death in your members and walk with Him in newness of life.

Through Baptism, you will gather new faithful into the People of God. Through the Sacrament of Penance, you will forgive sins in the name of Christ and the Church; with the holy oil, you will bring relief to the sick. By celebrating the sacred rites and raising prayers of praise and supplication throughout the day, you will become the voice of the People of God and of all humanity.

Aware of having been chosen from among men and appointed on their behalf to care for the concerns of God, carry out Christ's priestly work with joy and sincere charity, intent solely on pleasing God and not yourselves.

Finally, sharing in the mission of Christ, Head and Shepherd, in filial communion with your Prelate and the local bishops, strive to unite the faithful into one family, to lead them to God the Father through Christ in the Holy Spirit. Keep always before your eyes the example of the Good Shepherd, who came not to be served but to serve, and to seek and save what was lost.