



Annus Sacerdotalis

19 Junii 2009 - 11 Junii 2010

"In this Year for Priests we are all called to explore and to rediscover the greatness of the sacrament which has configured us for ever to Christ the High Priest and has "consecrated" us all "in truth" (Jn 17: 19)" – From the Video Message of the Pope to the participants in the International retreat for Priests at Ars, 28th September 2009.

ROME 9/11 June 2010

This is the culmination of a long journey of reflection, prayer, right intention and dedication which involves all the priests of the world. It is a journey, moreover, which involves us all, because we are all called to holiness, being disciplines of Christ.

The International Meeting of Priests opens its embrace to seminarians, deacons, religious women, and to all those faithful who want to support the mission of their priests by prayer, sacrifice and by proper collaboration.

To Seminarians: *"Certainly, to be ministers at the service of the Gospel, study and careful, ongoing pastoral and theological formation are useful and necessary, but even more necessary is that "knowledge of love" which can only be learned in a "heart to heart" encounter with Christ. For it is he who calls us to break the bread of his love, to forgive sins and to guide the flock in his name. And for that reason we must never step back from the source of love which is his heart, pierced on the Cross" – Homily of Benedict XVI on the occasion of the opening of the Year for Priests, 19th June 2009.*

To Permanent Deacons: *"To you [...] Permanent Deacons. This fills all of us with joy. The Church thanks you and recognizes your dedication to your qualified ministerial work. At the same time, the Church would like to encourage you on the way of personal sanctification, in your prayer lives and in the spirituality of the diaconate. To you one can equally apply what the Pope has said to priests for the Year for Priests, that is that it is necessary "to work in favor of this pull of priests toward spiritual perfection, upon which, above all, depends the efficacy of their ministry"" – Congregation for the Clergy, Letter to Deacons, 10th August 2009.*

To Religious Women: *"In every age there have been men and women who, obedient to the Father's call and to the prompting of the Spirit, have chosen this special way of following Christ, in order to devote themselves to him with an "undivided" heart (cf. 1 Cor 7:34). Like the Apostles, they too have left everything behind in order to be with Christ and to put themselves, as he did, at the service of God and their brothers and sisters. In this way, through the many charisms of spiritual and apostolic life bestowed on them by the Holy Spirit, they have helped to make the mystery and mission of the Church shine forth, and in doing so have contributed to the renewal of society" – From the Introduction to the Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II, Vita Consacrata (1), 26th March 1996.*

To the Laity obliged to support priests in their parish communities: *"With her faithful and with her ministers, the Church is the priestly community on earth. She is organically structured as the Body of Christ to carry out effectively her historical mission of salvation, united with her Head. This is what St Paul teaches us: "You are the body of Christ and individually members of it" (1 Cor 12: 27). In fact, the members do not all have the same function: it is this that constitutes the beauty and life of the body (cf. 1 Cor 12: 14-17). The specific identity of the ordained faithful and lay people may be understood through the fundamental difference between the ministerial priesthood and the common priesthood" – Allocution of Pope Benedict XVI to the Bishops of Brazil, Castelgandolfo, 17th September 2009.*