
Called & Chosen

Reflections on
Ordination

• DIOCESE OF PAISLEY •

INTRODUCTION

At the end of June our Paisley diocese will experience the wonderful joy of having a new priest.

Matthew Carlin will be our first new priest for twelve years! Next year, please God, we will also have another new priest, Jonathan Whitworth, who has just been ordained as deacon in Rome. We also have two more seminarians who, God willing, will be ordained in the years to come.

So our diocese is once again experiencing the consolation of having new Shepherds to renew us and guide us, to teach us God's word and to nourish us with the Sacraments.

As our diocese prepares for a renewal of this great gift of God to us, it is good to pray and reflect upon the wonderful thing God is doing for our Church in sending us the gift of the priesthood.

This Novena takes us, day by day, through the Rite of Ordination of a Priest, from the promises the new priests takes and the vestments he wears, to the gift of the Eucharist and the Saints who have taught us about the Sacrifice of the Holy Mass, and much more.

I am personally looking forward to praying this Novena every day in order to prepare myself for my first ordination of a priest as bishop. I hope you will pray it too so that, as we learn to appreciate the great gift and mystery of the priesthood, God will bless our prayers with many more young men to serve us in this blessed service.

May Our Lady, Mother of Priests, bless you all.

Bishop John Keenan
Diocese of Paisley

Called

[kawl]

Verb:

cry out (a word or words).

"He heard an insistent voice calling his name."

At a Mass of Ordination, those to be ordained are called forward after the Proclamation of the Gospel. This reminds us that the priesthood is, first and foremost, a calling. This week we look at the scriptures and reflect on what it means to be called by God.

DAY ONE

The Call of Moses: Exodus

Read

Exodus 3:1-4:17

Reflection

Every vocation is an 'exodus'. Like Moses, we are called to leave behind what we know and trust completely in God to show us the way to a whole new world.

Discern

Where am I in my life? What do I want to achieve? Am I prepared to place *all* my trust in God?

DAY TWO

The Call of Samuel

Read

1 Samuel 3:1-19

Reflection

The call of Samuel reminds us of two important aspects of any vocation. Firstly, God's call is precisely that – it's His call! It's not something we can manufacture; the call belongs to God and to God alone. Secondly, it's apparent that part of having a vocation is having that patience to listen to that call. We live in a noisy world. We don't like silence, it makes us feel a bit uneasy, a wee bit uncertain. But it's precisely in that silence that God speaks to us.

Discern

Do I ever spend time in silent prayer? Do I have silent time before the Blessed Sacrament?

DAY THREE

The Call of Zechariah

Read

Luke 1:5-25

Reflection

For Zechariah, John's birth is something of a problem. It challenges his understanding of the world and his understanding of God. As you may be aware, God has a habit of challenging our plans! Our ambitions for ourselves and for our kids don't always coalesce with what God has planned for us. Countless times, in the Church, we hear young men saying 'Father I want to be a priest, I want to serve God but my mum/dad/gran wants something else for me'. In our Church it sometimes seems that we have a lot of Zechariahs! People who see God's plan as a problem, people who don't really want to commit to his project, people who answer God not with a 'yes' but with a 'don't know' or a 'not yet' or a 'not in my family'.

Discern

How would I react if my child, friend or colleague told me they wanted to be a priest?

DAY FOUR

The Call of Mary

Read

Luke 1:26-38

Reflection

There is something special about the bond we as Catholics have with Mary. Yet we should never lose sight of what essentially makes Mary so special. What makes Mary special, unique and blessed is the fact that she said 'yes' to God. When Gabriel appeared to her, Mary accepted her role in the plan of our salvation without hesitation, without doubt and without debate. Mary said 'yes' and the rest is history!

Discern

How can I say yes to God in my life?

DAY FIVE**The Call of the First Disciples****Read**

Mark 1:16-20

Reflection

The Call of the first disciples is probably one of the most familiar of all Gospel stories. In fact, it's so familiar we sometimes overlook just how mind-blowing it is! Just think about it for a moment: Jesus walks up to four men he doesn't know, He then asks them to abandon everything and follow Him and they do so instantly - without debate, without question and without price! Mark goes on to give us a rather intriguing detail. When Jesus calls James and John, they are in a boat, mending their nets. Those 'nets' are a great image of all that entangles us. All that keeps us from saying 'yes' to God in our lives. James and John managed to put them down, What about us?

Discern

What are the 'nets' in my life that entangle me? What prevents me from saying 'yes' to God in my life?

DAY SIX**The Call of the rich young man****Read**

Luke 18:18-30.

Reflection

The Rich Young Man goes away sad because he cannot let go of what prevents him from being close to God. To follow God's plan for our lives we need to let go of everything we don't need.

Discern

How do I spend my free time? Do I watch too much television or spend too much time online, or do I focus on what really matters?

DAY SEVEN**The Call of Paul****Read**

Acts of the Apostles 9:1-19

Reflection

Very few priests will have as dramatic a vocation story as St Paul but his story reminds us that whatever shape a vocation takes, it will require a constant conversion – turning away, every day, from temptations, distractions, from fears and selfish desires. A vocation also involves turning back, every day, to listen for the voice of the Lord in our lives.

Discern

What areas of our lives are in need of being turned back to the Lord? Where, in our daily lives, do we need to be 'converted'?

“

I have separated you from other people, that you should be mine.
- Leviticus 20:26

Chosen

[choh-zuh n]

Adjective

selected from several; preferred:

my chosen vocation.

After those to be ordained come forward, a priest presents them to the Church and asks the bishop to ordain them. After inquiring if they are worthy, the bishop accepts the request of the priest and the people show their consent by saying “Amen.” Here we are reminded that priests come from communities of faith. They have been chosen by God from families, parishes, schools and chaplaincies to serve His people. We also recognise the contribution of all those who form, educate and inspire our priests.

DAY ONE

Family

Today we pray that Diocese will continue to blessed with families who support priestly vocations.

Pope Francis

“The family is the community of love and life in

which every person learns to relate to others and to the world. All vocations make their first steps in the family.”

Prayer

We pray for all who are being called to priesthood or religious life, that they be supported by their families.

DAY TWO

Parish

Today we pray that Diocese will continue to blessed with Parishes who support priestly vocations.

Pope Francis

“The Church is the house

of mercy, and it is the “soil” where vocations take root, mature and bear fruit. “

Prayer

We pray for an increase in vocations to the priesthood and religious life, especially from within our parish community.

DAY THREE

Priest

Today we pray that our Diocese will continue to blessed with Priests who inspire vocations.

Pope Francis

The pastoral care of vocations is a fundamental part of Priestly ministry. Priests

accompany those who are discerning a vocation, as well as those who have already dedicated their lives to the service of God and of the community.

Prayer

We pray for our priests. We pray that they may courageously invite young men to consider the gift of a vocation to the priesthood.

DAY FOUR

Primary school

Today we pray that our Diocese will continue to blessed with primary schools that teach the faith with love.

Pope Francis

“I remember my first teach-

er, She is why I loved school. I visited her throughout her life, until she passed away, at 98. She taught me so much about my faith.”

Prayer

We pray for all our primary schools. We pray that God will bless them as they help our children begin their journey of faith.

DAY FIVE

Secondary school

Today we pray that our Diocese will continue to be blessed with Secondary schools that support our young people as they grow and mature in faith.

Pope Francis

“Our schools must show that they can rise to the promise found in each young person.

Our schools must give our young people a solid basis on which to build their lives; to let be everything they can be.”

Prayer

Lord, bless all our secondary schools. May they may all be lively centres for sound learning, new discovery, and the pursuit of wisdom; and grant that those who teach and those who learn may find you to be the source of all truth.

DAY SIX

University chaplaincies

Today we pray for all our University Chaplaincies.

Pope Francis

Our Universities must always understand that knowledge is for mission. Mission is never the fruit of a perfectly planned program or a well-organized manual.

Mission is always the fruit of a life which knows what it is to be found and healed, encountered and forgiven. Mission is born of a constant experience of God’s merciful anointing.

Prayer

Father, May everything we do begin with your inspiration and continue with your help. Bless all who minister in University Chaplaincies. May they know that all their work finds its origin in you.

DAY SEVEN

Seminaries

Today we pray for all those who help to train the Priests of tomorrow in our seminaries.

Pope Francis

Those who are involved in the formation of priests must have a big heart! They

are called to be not only friends and companions of those whose training is entrusted to them but true fathers!

Prayer

We pray that those who teach in seminaries inspire the fire of faith in trainee priests with their wisdom and love of Christ and His church.

Promise

[prom-is]

Noun

A statement that you will definitely do something in the future.

He made a solemn promise to God

During the Rite of Ordination, the person being ordained makes a total of six promises. Promises are important!

DAY ONE

Co-Worker: During the Rite of Ordination, the Bishop says to the candidate: "Are you resolved, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to discharge without fail the office of priesthood in the presbyteral order as a conscientious fellow worker with the bishops in caring for the Lord's flock?" The candidate answers: "I am".

Reflection

Priests aren't meant to be solo artists! They are called to work with the Bishop. The Bishop considers the priest to be his co-worker, his son, his brother and friend.

Prayer

We pray for John our Bishop, and all the priests of our Diocese that they will always minister together in peace and harmony.

DAY TWO

Shepherd: During the Rite of Ordination, the Bishop says to the candidate: "Are you resolved to celebrate the mysteries of Christ faithfully and religiously as the Church has handed them down to us for the glory of God and the sanctification of Christ's people?" The candidate answers: "I am".

Reflection

This promise reminds us that a Priest must be close to

the people he serves. Pope Francis famously spoke of how priests must be "shepherds living with the 'smell of the sheep.'" If priests truly are to be pastors they need to "go out to meet the people," especially the lost sheep.

Prayer

Lord, continue to bless us with priests who care for us, who make time for us and who love us deeply.

DAY THREE

Integrity: Bishop: "Are you resolved to hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience as the Apostle urges, and to proclaim this faith in word and action as it is taught by the Gospel and the Church's tradition?" Candidate: "I am".

Reflection

Priests are called to proclaim the faith in word and action, to be models of integrity. Throughout his time as Pope, Pope Francis has challenged priests to always understand that their authority derives not from worldly power but from

personal integrity and humility in imitation of Christ.

Prayer

Gracious and loving God, we thank you for the gift of our priests. Help our priests to be strong in their vocation. Set their souls on fire with love for your people. Grant them the wisdom, understanding, and strength they need to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Inspire them with the vision of your Kingdom.

DAY FOUR

During the Rite of Ordination, the Bishop says to the candidate: "Are you resolved to maintain and deepen a spirit of prayer appropriate to your way of life and, in keeping with what is required of you, to celebrate faithfully the liturgy of the hours for the Church and for the whole world?"

Candidate: "I am".

Reflection

A priest promises to pray! Pope Francis has said that the touchstone of how deeply a priest is living his vocation is the extent to which he seeks Christ in his daily life. In a typically direct question, Pope Francis asked a gathering of

Rome's priests at the beginning of Lent, "At night, how does your day end? With God, or with television?" At the heart of any priest's ministry must be a living relationship with Christ, so that the priest sees as Christ sees and loves as He loves. For this to happen, the priest needs to continue to grow in union with Christ through prayer!

Prayer

Heavenly Father, grant that our priests be strengthened and healed by the power of the Eucharist they celebrate. May the Word they proclaim give them courage and wisdom.

DAY FIVE

Teacher: During the Rite of Ordination, the Bishop says to the candidate: "Are you resolved to exercise the ministry of the word worthily and wisely, preaching the gospel and explaining the Catholic faith?" Candidate: "I am".

Reflection

A Priest is called to explain the Catholic faith and to bear witness to the light of God's word. This means that the priest doesn't teach his own ideas or philosophies or any-

thing else that pleases! Rather the priest is called to teach in the name of Christ. The truth the priest teaches is Christ himself, His word and His way of living.

DAY SIX

Mercy: During the Rite of Ordination, the Bishop says to the candidate: "Are you resolved to consecrate your life to God for the salvation of his people, and to unite yourself more closely every day to Christ the High Priest, who offered himself for us to the Father as a perfect sacrifice?" Candidate: "I am, with the help of God".

Reflection

DAY SEVEN

Obedience: Then the candidate goes to the bishop and, kneeling before him, places his joined hands between those of the bishop. If the bishop is the candidate's own Ordinary, he asks: "Do you promise respect and obedience to me and my successors?" Candidate: "I do".

Reflection

People often find it strange that priests promise obedience. Promises of obedience don't really seem to fit with modern notions of freedom and independence. Pope Francis, however, suggests that to really understand what 'obedience' is we have to look at where the word comes from. In the Latin language the word 'obey' isn't so much about carrying out

Prayer

Lord, continue to bless us with wise and worthy priests.

Pope Francis told a group of ten newly-ordained priests that the most important advice he could give them was simply, "Be merciful." Pope Francis never tires of challenging priests to be witnesses of the power of God's mercy.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, renew in our priests the spirit of holiness with whom they have been anointed.

orders but rather about hearing and listening to what others are saying to us. Obeying God is about listening to God, it's about having an open heart to follow the path that God points out to us. Obedience to God is listening to God and it sets us free.

Prayer

Praise to you, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for in your love you care for your people by the ministry of priests. May their faithful service bring lasting good to your church and great happiness to them. Help them to do what is right, that by their teaching and living we may grow in the knowledge of your love.

“

Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God? - John 11:40

The Saints

[seynt]

Noun

A person of great holiness, virtue, or benevolence.

At this time, the Litany of the Saints is chanted. The Litany brings those seeking to be ordained into the unseen company of the members of the Church who are already in heaven - into the communion of saints. Pope Francis says: "The saints are not supermen who are born perfect, but rather they are ordinary people who followed God with all their heart".

This week we reflect on the Saints. We pray for the grace and the strength to follow their example.

DAY ONE

St Joseph - Trust

"I like St Joseph, he is a strong man of silence. In my desk, I have an image of St Joseph sleeping. Sleeping, he looks after the church. And when I have a problem, I put a letter under his statue. So that he can dream about it." - Pope Francis. St Matthew's Gospel reports that it was while he slumbered

that God revealed his plans to Joseph through a dream. Joseph trusted in God's plan for his future.

Prayer

O Lord, when we feel our weakness and helplessness, give us the sense of Your presence. Help us to have perfect trust in Your protecting love.

DAY TWO

Catherine of Siena - Devotion to the Eucharist

Today we reflect on the life of Catherine of Siena - saint, mystic and doctor of the Church patroness of Italy and of Europe.

Throughout her life, Catherine was known for her great holiness. Her holiness came from nothing other than her great devotion to the Eucharist. As Pope Benedict said "The Eucharist motivated each and every one of Catherine's ac-

tions and was the source of her supernatural joy".

Prayer

Lord, help us to imitate the example of Saint Catherine. May we always be aware of your presence in the Most Holy Eucharist. May we never feel that Mass is simply a duty or an obligation but, rather, an opportunity to enter into Your Life.

DAY THREE

Saint Teresa of Avila - Persistence in Prayer

Today we reflect on the life of Saint Teresa of Avila. The life of Teresa reminds us of the importance of prayer.

Pope Francis tells us that Teresa is primarily a teacher of prayer. He says: "Teresa's prayer was not reserved only to one space or to one time of day; it arose spontaneously in the most diverse occasions. Teresa was convinced of the

value of continuous prayer, even if it was not always perfect. Teresa asks us to be steadfast, faithful, even in times of dryness or personal difficulties."

Prayer

Lord, help us to follow the example of Saint Teresa and to persist in prayer, even when it seems difficult or dry.

DAY FOUR

Saint Matthew - The Power of God's Mercy

Today we reflect on the life of Saint Matthew. The life of Saint Matthew reminds us of the power of God's mercy. As we hear in the Gospel, Matthew abandoned earthly wealth and dishonest practices to follow Jesus. Matthew became one of the twelve apostles and wrote the first Gospel. He died a martyr's death and inherited the treasure of heaven. In 1953, on the feast of Saint Matthew, the young Jorge Bergoglio (Pope Francis), at the age of 17, experienced, in a very special and intimate way, the loving presence of God

in his life. He went to confession and felt his heart touched by the mercy of God. It changed his life. At that moment, he also felt God's call to the priesthood and religious life as a Jesuit. The merciful call of Jesus changed Matthew's life. It changed Jorge Bergoglio's life. It changes our lives.

Prayer

Lord, help us always to be aware of the great gift of your mercy. May we never be slow or hesitant in asking for forgiveness.

DAY FIVE

Saint Ignatius - Finding God in all things

Today we reflect on the life of Saint Ignatius. The life of Saint Ignatius reminds that we can find God in all things. Ignatius was a Spanish soldier and aristocrat who discerned his calling after suffering nearly fatal wounds on the battlefield. He established the Society of Jesus in 1540, instructing the early Jesuits to go out and “find God in all things.” The spirituality of Ignatius and the Jesuits is based on the conviction that God is active in our world. As the great Jesuit thinker Pierre Teilhard de Chardin wrote: “God is not

remote from us. He is at the point of my pen, my pick, my paintbrush, my needle — and my heart and my thoughts.” The spiritual path laid out by Ignatius is a way of discerning God’s presence in our everyday lives. And doing something about it!

Prayer

Lord, help us to follow the spiritual path of Saint Ignatius and always be aware of your presence in our world, in our community and in our lives.

DAY SIX

Saint John Vianney - Service

Today we reflect on the life of Saint John Vianney. The life of Saint John reminds us that we are called to service. John was a French parish priest who became famous for his pastoral work in his parish in Ars, France. He was known to be

totally devoted and dedicated to his parishioners.

Prayer

Lord, inspire us to follow the example of Saint John Vianney. Help us to always put the needs of others before our own. Amen

DAY SEVEN

Saint Monica - Patience

Parents worry about their children. They worry especially if their children aren’t involved in the Church or have drifted from the practice of the faith. Such worries aren’t new. Back in the fourth century, Saint Monica worried about her son Augustine. She worried that he had drifted from the faith and was now living a life not based on Gospel values. She prayed day after day, year after year. Then one day, August-

tine came home to the Church. What’s more – he went onto become one of the Church’s greatest Saints!

Prayer

Dear Saint Monica, you faced trials and tribulations in your family life. Yet, you never despaired or lost faith. With confidence, persistence, and profound faith you prayed daily for the conversion of your husband and your son. Your prayers were answered.

“

God is not remote from us.

He is at the point of my pen,

my pick, my paintbrush, my

needle - and my heart and my

thoughts. - Pierre Teilhard

Hands

[hand]

Noun

The end part of a person's arm beyond the wrist, including the palm, fingers, and thumb.

The palm of his hand

During the Mass of Ordination, hands are really important! Just after the litany of the Saints, the Bishop lays his hands on the person being ordained. Then all the priests present do the same. The laying on of hands by the Bishop and the other priests invokes the Holy Spirit to come down upon the one to be ordained, giving him a sacred character and setting him apart for ministry. Later in the Rite, the Bishop will anoint the hands of the person being ordained with the oil of Chrism. This reminds us that a priest's hands are consecrated for God's work. This week we'll reflect on the gift and the mystery of a Priest's hands.

DAY ONE

Ordain

Priests are ordained at the hands of a Bishop. They are set apart for ministry. But, in a sense, each one of us is ordained by God – set aside for service, called to minister and called to bring others to God. *Today we pray to always remember that God has called each and everyone of us to do Him a definite service.*

DAY TWO

Anoint

The hands of a priest are anointed by a Bishop. The hands of a priest are consecrated, they are prepared for sacred duty. *In my life, what duties am I called too? Am I fulfilling those duties? Am I giving my best for God?*

DAY THREE

Forgive

The hands of a priest forgive. As Catholics, we believe that God's forgiveness comes to us through the ministry of the priest. In Confession, the priest, acting in the person of Jesus, forgives our sins. *How often do we seek God's mercy in that sacrament? Is Confession a part of my spiritual journey? If not why not?*

DAY FOUR

Heal

The hands of a priest heal. The healing ministry of Jesus continues in the work of our priests. Through the Sacraments, Jesus the healer draws close to us. *What areas need healed, restored or renewed? Do I trust that Lord will heal me?*

DAY FIVE

Bless and Unite

The hands of a Priest bless and unite. An important part of a priest's ministry is blessing and uniting couples in marriage. *Today we pray for all the married couples in our community. We pray that God may strengthen their unity and always bless their love.*

DAY SIX

Consecrate

The hands of a Priest consecrate. Priest's hands are really important – not least when it comes to saying Mass! At Mass, through the power of Holy Spirit, the bread and wine is changed into the Body and Blood of Christ through the hands of the priest. The hands of a priest bring Christ into our communities. *How can I join in that work? How can we bring Christ into our families, our schools and our communities?*

DAY SEVEN

Commission

The hands of a Priest commission. A Priest is called to work with lay people. They share with him the work of establishing God's kingdom. Lay people participate, in their own way, in the priestly, prophetic, and royal function of Christ himself. *Am I prepared to get more involved in my parish community? Is there anything holding me back? Am I prepared to commit my time and energy to my parish community?*

Prayer

[prair]

Noun

A spiritual communion with God.

The Lord answered his prayer.

After the laying of hands, the candidate kneels before the bishop. With his hands extended over the candidate, he sings the Prayer of Consecration or says it aloud. This week we'll reflect on the prayer of Consecration. Together with the laying on of hands, this is an essential moment of ordination.

DAY ONE

Gift: Come to our help, Lord, holy Father, You watch over the growing family of man by your gift of wisdom and your pattern of order. When you had appointed high priests to rule your people, you chose other men next to them in rank and dignity to be with them and to help them in their task; and so there grew up the ranks of priests and the offices of levites, established by sacred rites.

The first part of the Prayer of Ordination powerfully reminds us just how ancient the priesthood is. We are reminded too that the priesthood comes from God – it is a gift to the world. Today we thank God for all the priests who have been part of our lives. The priests who baptised us, the priests who prepared us for the Sacraments and the priests who were always there for us. They are God's gift. A gift for which we are grateful.

DAY TWO

Sacrifice: You shared among the sons of Aaron the fullness of their father's power, to provide worthy priests in sufficient number for the increasing rites of sacrifice and worship.

When describing just what priests are called to do, the Prayer of Ordination uses the word 'sacrifice'. When it comes to the priesthood, 'sacrifice' is a really important idea. Priests are called to offer the Holy 'Sacrifice of the Mass'. Priests too are called to sacrifice things in their lives so that they can serve us more fully. Priests sacrifice careers, family and money so they can care for us. Today we give thanks for the many sacrifices our priests have made.

DAY THREE

Worship: (From the prayer of Ordination) You shared among the sons of Aaron the fullness of their father's power, to provide worthy priests in sufficient number for the increasing rites of... worship.

Worship is perhaps one of those words we hear a lot but never quite fully grasp. Simply put, if we are worshipping something we are giving it worth, we are saying that it matters and that it really is important. We worship God because He is worth it. We go to Mass to 'worship' because God is worth our time and our energy. We pray today that we will always give to God what is best in our lives. We pray that we will always use our gifts and talents in God's service – because He is worth it!

DAY FOUR

Companions: With the same loving care, you gave companions to your Son's apostles to help in teaching the faith; they preached the gospel to the whole world.

The prayer of ordination describes priests as companions – not bosses or managers, but companions. Priests are called to accompany us on our journey of faith. Today we give thanks to God for all the priests in our lives and in our communities who have been our companions throughout the years.

DAY FIVE

Dignity: Almighty Father, grant to this servant of yours the dignity of the priesthood.

The prayer of ordination talks about the dignity of the priesthood. As Christians we are challenged to recognise the dignity of every person. We are challenged to recognise that they are made in the image and likeness of God. Today we pray that we recognise the God-given dignity of everyone we encounter.

DAY SIX

Renew: (From the prayer of Ordination) Renew within him the Spirit of holiness.

Sometimes people think faith is a possession – something we have or don't have, like a car or an iPad or a mortgage. Not so! Faith is alive and active. Faith grows and matures and develops. Faith is vibrant, energetic and powerful. This means that our faith needs to be constantly renewed – by prayer, by works of charity, by receiving the Sacraments and by meditating upon God's Word. Today we pray that we always strive to renew our faith through the power of the Holy Spirit.

DAY SEVEN

Fidelity: From the prayer of Ordination. May he be faithful in working with the order of bishops, so that the words of the Gospel may reach the ends of the earth, and the family of nations, made one in Christ, may become God's one, holy people.

Being a Catholic today can be difficult. We live in a society which often excludes God in all sorts of ways. The challenge for us is to be faithful – to always hold to what we know to be true, good and beautiful. Throughout the world millions of Christians are persecuted for their faith. We pray today that we may be inspired by the example of their fidelity.

“

God is not remote from us.
He is at the point of my pen,
my pick, my paintbrush, my
needle - and my heart and my
thoughts. - Pierre Teilhard

Vesting

[ves-ting]

Noun

Clothing worn by priests.

After the prayer of consecration, they are dressed in the vestments that are worn by priests. The stole, that was worn diagonally when they were deacons, is now adjusted to hang equally on each side. Above the stole they receive the priestly vestment, the chasuble. One of the most symbolic and poignant moments during an ordination is when the newly ordained priest is vested, for the first time, as a priest. This week we'll reflect on some of the vestments worn by our priests. We'll also consider some of symbols connected with the ministry of the Bishop.

DAY ONE

Alb

The long linen gown worn by the priest is called the alb. Alb means simply 'white garment'. They are not only worn by those in holy orders. People are being baptised, making their First Holy Communion or being Confirmed sometimes also wear albs. It reminds all of us that we are called to a new identity in Christ.

I know my life isn't perfect. I know I sin and fall short of God's plan for my life. Do I really want to change my life? Do I really want to accept God's plan for my life?

DAY TWO

Cincture

The priest fastens the alb around his waist with a cincture. The cincture is a rope serving as a belt or a girdle. The cincture serves to remind the Priest that he is bound to Jesus, connected to Him through Ordination.

How am I 'bound' to Jesus in my life? Am I prepared to give Him everything? Are there any areas or aspects of my life that closed to His love?

DAY THREE

Stole

Stoles are worn by Bishops, priests and deacons. Simply put, they are the scarf-like vestment you'll see around the necks of those in Holy Orders. The origins of the stole are slightly obscure, but it's believed that the stole was given to priests as a sign of their office, as a sign of their special commission to preach God's word.

In the Church we all have offices. We all have duties and responsibilities assumed at Baptism. Today let's pray for the grace to always live to up those responsibilities.

DAY FOUR

Chasuble

The Chasuble is the large outer vestment worn by the priest at Mass. Historians believe that this poncho-like garment was probably the dress of the lower classes of Roman Society. Every time we see the Priest vested in the Chasuble it serves as a reminder that the priest is there not to dictate or dominate but to serve.

How I do serve my parish community? How can I serve those who are in need?

DAY FIVE

Amice

Although not as popular as it once was, many priests today wear an amice. An amice consists of a white cloth connected to two long ribbon-like attachments, by which it is fastened around the shoulders. The amice is sometimes referred to 'as the helmet of salvation'. Traditionally, when a priest put on the amice, he'd pray to be guarded against temptation.

In our daily lives we encounter all sorts of temptations. Do we ask God to help us at these times? Do we turn to Him in prayer?

DAY SIX

Mitre

The Mitre is the very distinctive head gear worn by a Bishop during liturgies. The mitre certainly isn't a new fashion accessory. Some scholars say we can trace its history right back to the time of Moses. The mitre reminds us of the authority which the Church gives to bishops to teach the faith.

In our daily lives, do we really take on board what the Church teaches? Do we listen to the teaching of the Church when it comes to making important choices in our lives?

DAY SEVEN

Crozier

A crozier is the staff carried by the Bishop. The crozier reminds us that the Bishop is the 'Shepherd of the Flock'.

Being a shepherd isn't easy. Being a shepherd means long hours. Being a shepherd means searching for the lost. How can we help our Bishop in his ministry as a Shepherd? How can we support our Shepherd?

“ It would be easier for the world to survive without the sun than to do without Holy Mass. - Padre Pio

Bread & Wine

The new priests then return to the bishop who places bread on a paten and wine in a chalice in their consecrated hands. This handing over of the offerings that will be consecrated in the Mass symbolizes the power they have received to offer the Mass.

The bishop says: “Accept from the holy people of God the gifts to be offered to him. Know what you are doing, and imitate the mystery you celebrate: model your life on the mystery of the Lord’s Cross.”

As it draws to its conclusion, the Rite of Ordination focuses on the Eucharist. This week, accompanied by Pope Francis, Saint John Vianney, J.R.R Tolkien and Padre Pio, we’ll reflect on this gift and the mystery of the Most Holy Eucharist.

DAY ONE

“The Eucharist is such a great gift. That’s why going to Mass is so important. Going to Mass not just to pray, but to receive Communion, the Bread and Body of Christ. It saves us, forgives us and it makes us one with the Father. How beautiful!” - Pope Francis

DAY TWO

“The Eucharist is no mere symbol, but is in fact the true body and blood of Jesus Christ, which has the ability to transform our hearts and minds to be more like him. The Eucharist is Jesus who gives himself entirely to us.” - Pope Francis

DAY THREE

“We know how important it was for Jesus to share meals with his disciples, but also, and especially, with sinners and outcasts. Sitting at table, Jesus was able to listen to others, to hear their stories, to appreciate their hopes and aspirations, and to speak to them of the Father’s love. At each Eucharist we should be inspired to follow his example, by reaching out to others, in a spirit of respect and openness, in order to share with them the gift we ourselves have received.” - Pope Francis

DAY FOUR

“Every time we take part in the Holy Mass and nourish ourselves with the Body of Christ, the presence of Jesus and of the Holy Spirit acts in us, it moulds our heart, communicates to us interior attitudes that are translated in behaviour according to the Gospel.” -Pope Francis

DAY FIVE

“When we receive Holy Communion, we experience something extraordinary – a joy, a fragrance, a wellbeing that thrills the whole body and causes it to exalt.” - Saint John Vianney

DAY SIX

“Out of the darkness of my life, so much frustrated, I put before you the one great thing to love on earth: the Blessed Sacrament ... There you will find romance, glory, honour, fidelity, and the true way of all your loves upon earth.” - J.R.R Tolkien

DAY SEVEN

“It would be easier for the world to survive without the sun than to do without Holy Mass.” - Saint Padre Pio

