

The Rite of Ordination
to the Sacred Priesthood
Brother Francisco Gomez, S.T.
Brother Kevin O'Donnell, S.T.
The Church of St. Camillus
Silver Spring, Mary
May 21, 1983
11:00 a.m.

"It is not ourselves we preach, but Christ Jesus
as Lord, and ourselves for Jesus' sake." 2 Cor. 4:5

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, let me say at
the outset how deeply privileged I am to preside at
this Liturgy of Ordination. My association with the
Trinitarian Fathers and Brothers goes back to the year
1967, in Cleveland, Ohio, where I received my first
appointment as a priest. The "junior" priests of the
Franciscans and Trinitarians studied together in a summer
long pastoral workshop. In the fall of the year, I
began my full time ministry as a high school religion
teacher in suburban Parma. However, whenever I could,
I would escape to the central city of Cleveland to
St. Agnes Church, where the Trinitarians served the

poor and participated in works of justice. How much I learned from my Trinitarian Brothers! How often we wept over Jerusalem together. How frequently we nourished each other with a brother's love! How regularly we prayed together and celebrated the Eucharist together - we, who, as will our Brothers Francisco and Kevin, "Possessed the treasure of our priesthood in earthen vessels, to make it clear that its surpassing power comes from God and not from us." (2 Corinthians 4:7) Today, in the Diocese of Cleveland, the Trinitarians continue a selfless and devoted service to the people of our beloved city, particularly to our poor. Finally, on such an occasion as this, I cannot help but recall for all of us an eminent and extraordinarily dedicated Trinitarian priest, Father Albert Koklowski, whom the Lord recently called to eternal life.

Let me also take this opportunity to express my sincerest appreciation and that of Father Hamm and the Trinitarian Fathers and Brothers to Mr. & Mrs. Gomez, Rosemary and Frank, and Mr. & Mrs. O'Donnell, Margaret and Rowland. You have given your sons to the Church with the joy and generosity of truly Christian parents. Francisco and Kevin have been formed from the stuff of your lives and the depth of your faith. We are profoundly grateful to you and eternally indebted to you and your family.

My friends, while it is a special honor for me to preside at this Liturgy of Ordination, it is indeed good for all of us to be here - to participate in this "remarkable sight" (Exodus 3:3) of Ordination, wherein, like the burning bush, we shall experience uniquely the pentecostal flames of God's ordaining hand. We come together, my friends, with the understanding that

there is only one High Priest, Jesus Christ, the just intercessor and mediator between God and his people and the chief reconciler in the human family. (Confer Hebrews, especially Chapters 9 and 10) "He is an offering for our sins," says John, "and not only for our sins, but for those of the whole world." (I John 2:2) Baptized into the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, all of us - we who are the "faithful" - are a "royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9). Each of us shares in this priesthood and lives it out in different ways. Today, you and I come together because the Lord has singled out from the Church and the fraternity of the Trinitarian Fathers and Brothers two disciples, Francisco and Kevin, for that singular and empowering gift of ordained ministry, of pastoral and prophetic leadership, through which they shall have a different and distinct relationship with the People of God - the Lord's personal ordained

ambassador and emmisary. Brothers and Sisters, as I now address my brothers directly, I ask that you join with me, and in the name of the whole Church, make my words your own.

In an issue of U.S. Catholic Magazine (January, 1982), in an article entitled, "Why People Are Coming Back to Church," the writer tells us that people are searching for something important in life and that they are trying to rediscover a sense of mystery. He reports that men and women are increasingly experiencing a spiritual void in their lives and that the pleasures of upward mobility are fleeting. Commenting that the pragmatic materialism characteristic of our society is incapable of satisfying the deepest longings of the human heart, the author quotes the noted psychiatrist Victor Frankl, who observes, ". . . an ever-increasing number of our clients today suffer from a feeling of interior emptiness. . .

an ever-increasing number of our clients today suffer from a feeling of interior emptiness. . . a feeling of total absence of a meaning to existence."

(As found in, Forum, NCEA Religious Education Newsletter, January 1982)

Brother Francisco and Brother Kevin, why do I place before you this bold datum of contemporary life? Simply because it represents a clear example, among many, of that fundamental reason why you are called and chosen to be an ordained priest of Jesus Christ. In the words of the Apostle Paul,

"It is not ourselves we preach, but Christ Jesus as Lord." 2 Corinthians 4:5

There is a hunger in the embodied spirits of our people, Brother Francisco and Brother Kevin, it is a hunger for God. The Church was founded to preach Christ Jesus, in order that this hunger might be satisfied. As the Lord's ordained minister, you, as a special collaborator with the bishop, will personify the mission

of the Church, which is to do the work of Jesus. This work of Jesus is, in the words of St. Paul:

to live a life worthy of the calling you have received, with perfect humility, meekness and patience, bearing with one another lovingly. . . and to preserve that unity which has the Spirit as its origin and peace as its binding force. . . to build up the Body of Christ till we become one in faith and in the knowledge of God's son, and form that perfect man who is Christ come to full stature.

Ephesians 4:1-4,13

As you personify both this mission and this calling as the Lord's ordained priest, you are in a most unique way challenged to that "greater love which no one has than to lay down one's life for one's friends" - to love the People of God as did Christ himself. (Confer

John 15:12-13.)

My brothers Francisco and Kevin, called to the Order of Presbyter, may I offer you three personal convictions for your consideration:

First, do not fear to be who you are uniquely called to be, to do what you are uniquely called to do. Christ himself did not hesitate to pull the Twelve and the disciples apart from the people - to address them in a special way, with a special word, and to give them a special task. He did not hesitate to pray - just with them. You are now called to be an intimate collaborator in the preaching of the Gospel: do not pull back from the demands and challenges of that intimacy. Even when you falter or fall - for you "possess this treasure in earthen vessels" - remember, you remain the Lord's prized and special envoy. He shall always be with you. (Confer Romans 12:1-9)

Secondly, this is the age of personal fulfillment and individual freedom, of personal goals and individual accomplishments, of introversion and pleasure comforts. As priests you are the sign of a different focus: that other-directedness which was the chief characteristic of the life of Christ and of your founder, Father Thomas Augustine Judge. Your treasures, my Brothers, are the poor, the hungry, the homeless and the unemployed, the orphans, the handicapped, and the lonely, our often-aimless and always-searching youth; the used and abused of our society, the neglected and rejected, the "least" of our brothers and sisters. Your treasures, too, are the hurting people and people longing for healing - those who have not heard the Gospel, the unchurched, alienated Catholics, our divorced and separated brothers and sisters.

Brother Kevin, you stated it so well in your letter to me, when you wrote:

To be a priest. . . for me is to be someone who is not just a passive observer to the needs, struggles, resources, and successes of people, nor one who helps to maintain the status quo; but rather one who gives serious, prayerful reflection on the redemptive and prophetic needs of people.

Thirdly, remember that your ministry takes place "in the world" - in all of the unredeemed spheres of human existence. It is to the world that the message of salvation must be given; it is with the world that the power and folly of the cross as well as the radiant hope of the resurrection must be shared. I state this to assert that there is nothing "otherworldly" about your ministry or about the Christian life. In his Solemn prayer, Jesus affirmed, "They do not belong to the world . . .

they are not of the world. . . , in order to instruct us that the signs of death - pride, envy, anger, greed, lust, intemperance, injustice, violence, and so on - are inconsonant with the Christian way. But with equal vigor, Jesus begs the Father, "I do not ask you to take them out of the world. . . . As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world." (Confer, John 17:1-19)

Brother Francisco, how clearly you told me this, reflecting upon your recent ministry in Mexico:

These months have called me to witness God's presence (though at times hidden) even in the most ordinary occasions: an old lady busy at her prayers, a woman upset over her family's problems, a dog asleep in the center aisle of the Church. There were also many dramatic moments: a man weeping over the loss of his wife, the

smiles of a very poor newlywed couple, the tears of praise to her God upon the eyes of a woman who had known gang rape at nine years of age, attempted suicide, prostitution, abortion, . . . much suffering.

My brothers, do not shrink from the world, do not withdraw from its pains and groans. This unredeemed, conflict-ridden world of loveless lives, empty hearts, inquiring minds, broken families, estranged minorities, and international tensions and violence - do not run from this world into an "other world." The "other world" does not need the Gospel; this world does.

In this world of ours, every time unemployment rises 1%, 4% more people end up in state prisons; 5.7% more people are murdered; 4.3% more men and 2.3% more women are admitted to mental hospitals for the first time, and 4.1% more people commit suicide.¹ This is

¹As found in "Family Ministry at a Critical Stage," Auxiliary Bishop J. Francis Stafford, of Baltimore, Report given at 1981 November NCCB Meeting.

the world that needs the Gospel.

In this world, people who are different from the majority, or who have been confined to specific roles, still suffer from systemic discrimination and personal prejudices. But, - and this is the responsibility of the priest - how often our people need to hear those salvific words of St. Peter:

I begin to see how true it is that God shows no partiality. Rather, the man of any nation who fears God and acts uprightly is acceptable to him. (Acts 10:34)

Or these classic words from James:

My brothers, your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not allow favoritism. . . .
If you show favoritism, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

(James 2:1,9)

Yes, this world, in which discrimination still exists, needs the Gospel.

It is out of the experience of this world that the fundamental life questions are asked: Who is the human person? What is the meaning and purpose of our lives? What is goodness and what is sin? Where lies the path to true happiness? What is the truth about death, judgement, and retribution beyond the grave? What, finally, is that ultimate and unutterable mystery which engulfs our beings?¹

My Brothers, this is the world and the life experience that needs the Gospel. The Gospel can dispel our doubts, fears, and anxieties. The Gospel can transform our ways and remake and revive our consciences. The Gospel can bring meaning to our empty lives. The Gospel

¹Confer "Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions" of the II Vatican Council.

can bring peace to a materialistic, crisis-filled world.

I repeat - your ministry takes place "in the world," in the unredeemed spheres of human existence. Do not shrink from this world, its anxieties and its hopes. And, I repeat, God's people hunger for the word of God.

My brothers and sisters of this congregation, every Eucharist represents the clarity of Jesus' identity and the boldness of His in-breaking into the world, for in these humble signs of bread and wine the mystery of divine intervention in an unredeemed world is re-enacted. May each of us here be nourished by this Eucharistic food, that our share in the priestly and prophetic service of Christ may lead the world to that salvation for which it so deeply longs, to that awesome presence of God, where, were it not for Jesus, the sole Mediator between God and the human family, we could not enter: "Come

no nearer," God said to Moses, "Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground." (Exodus 3:5)

All of us yearn for a universe in which the fullness of Christ's order and redemption is experience. In the words of the poet, Langston Hughes - and, my Brothers Francisco and Kevin, we depend upon you---

I dream a world where man
No other will scorn,
Where love will bless the earth
And peace its paths adorn,
I dream a world where all
Will know sweet freedom's way,
Where greed no longer saps the soul
Nor avarice blights our day,
A world I dream where black or white,
Whatever race you be,
Will share the bounties of the earth
And every man is free,
Where wretchedness will hang its head,
And joy, like a pearl,
Attend the needs of all mankind,
Of such I dream -
Our world.

The Rite of Ordination
to the Priesthood
Brother Arthur Anderson, O.F.M.
Brother Albert Haase, O.F.M.
The Franciscan Province of the
Sacred Heart
Corpus Christi Church
Chicago, Illinois
June 4, 1983

Introduction

(The story of the lady and gentleman in the cab during the 1983 winter snowstorm, New York's LaGuardia Airport.)

Brother Art and Brother Al, there are two parts to this lady's query. There is, first of all, that primary classic question that arises from the reality of one's being in the world and the experience of one's human limitations. Who am I? Why am I here on this earth? What is the purpose of life? Where lies the path to true happiness? What is my destiny?

The second query is really a plea for help in responding to and pursuing these fundamental quests. The plea, "Tell me," is an urgent cry to someone who can help unfold the mystery of life; it is an entreaty for the aid of a specialist, a professional, if you will, to help one deal with these bedrock questions of human existence and inner groanings of the human heart.

Let me say to you, Brother Art and Brother Al, that, from my pastoral experience, "What am I to do with my life?" is the most frequent and basic question you shall hear as priests. This inquiry is expressed in countless ways. When people ask it, they do not expect the precise answers of a Baltimore Catechism, or a map with every street and avenue delineated, or even a compass with directional precision. When our people ask such questions, they are searching for meaning, they are seeking a community of people who share a common meaning and direction in life. Gifted with human freedom, they, nevertheless, cry for a family in and through which they can shape their consciences by principles, an ethos, and a tradition that can assist them in their growing and becoming, in reconciling and unifying the seeming contradictions in their lives, and, above all, in their innate yearning for the Holy, the Eternal, and the Transcendent.

Brother Art and Brother Al, today you present yourselves for the Order of Presbyter. As you know from your own ministerial experience and theological studies, ordained priestly ministry is a multifaceted service to the People of God, in reality ranging from the banality of bingo to the beauty of baptism! I cannot emphasize enough for you, however, that people want and need from

you the exercise of a priestly role that sets you apart (not separates you) as a special and unique emissary of the Lord, so that you can become involved in the lives of men and women and in the critical questions of our day in a manner that is truly in-depth, profound, and spiritually intimate. Our people want and need shepherds in the life of faith - pastors of groaning and searching spirits, who, like the Lord, can truly say, "I know mine and mine know me," men of prayer who know the Lord so deeply that they can speak His word with knowledge and conviction, and mediators who can stand between the Lord and his people rendering faithfully God's plea to people and people's plea to God.

Such thoughts are reflected in a recent survey by the Association of Theological Schools which ascertained the expectations that the laity have of priests. Responding to this survey, the people singled out four expectations they have of priests. Catholics, the survey noted, want priests, "good shepherds" --

- 1) rooted in the knowledge of theological studies;
- 2) able to preach;
- 3) able to relate sympathetically to people;
- 4) able to lead the parish in praise and worship.

A close examination of these four expectations reveals that our people desire in priests a person capable of exploring with them and placing before them life's

fundamental questions and the response that faith offers to these question.

God's self-communication, as mediated by Christian preaching, initiates men and women into a new self-consciousness. Divine revelation discloses the human person unto himself. A person cannot come to self-knowledge by looking at self alone: the person must be given that self-knowledge by a divine Other. In the Gospel God reveals to us that we are his sons and daughters: we are led to acknowledge ourselves as people with a destiny, placed in a context of meaning, possessing ourselves in peace.

(Gregory Baum, Faith and Doctrine, p. 19. [accommodated quote])

Let me be clear, however. This is no call to an ivory-towered or bookish exercise of priestly ministry. Quite the contrary. Theological knowledge for the sake of theological knowledge is dead, just as faith without good works is dead. What you share with the People of God must be born of the faith-struggles of your own life and the at-times painful confrontation between self and sin, as well as the exhilarating victory of a life overtaken by grace. The Lord calls and ordains you, Brother Art and Brother Al, fully human: limited, sinful, weak, sharing with those whom you are invited

to serve that same incompleteness you are called to heal and reclaim for the Lord. Know yourselves well, therefore: your strengths and your weaknesses, your goodness and your sinfulness. From this self-knowledge, born of that consciousness that comes from faith, will come your ability to be compassionate, tolerant, and understanding of those whom you will serve, as well as the ability to perceive within those to whom you minister those hidden gifts of the Spirit that they may not know but for the sound of your voice. Walk humbly before your Lord and Saviour: from your humility will flow your strength.

How well you stated this in your letter to me, Brother Art, when you said: "the priest must be willing to assess honestly his own strengths and gifts, and weaknesses and limitations, with a view to (a) employing that knowledge as fully as possible in his ministry; (b) using his gifts in a way that effects the conscious emergence of his and others' gifts and talents which are not always initially identifiable; and (c) wisely exercising his ministry without attending solely to his own personal preferences."

More specifically, my brothers, you shall serve the People of God in an interlocking mission of prophet, disciple-maker, and mediator.

As prophet, you shall speak-for-God in a society

characterized by a spirit of competition, exploitation, lack of trust, envy and hostility, conflicts among people with different value systems, and the impact of such ills as secularism, materialism, consumerism, sexism, racism, war and violence. Within the hearts of many individuals there exists fear and anxieties, loneliness and dependency, crises of faith, a loss of a sense of commitment, fidelity, and permanency in relationships, lack of self-esteem, and a sense of estrangement from God. In the context of these and so many other problems that corrode the very souls of our people, you must prophecy, Brother Art and Brother Al, you must speak for God, you must exercise a mission to the afflicted. As proclaimed by the Prophet Isaiah:

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me . . .
He has sent me to bring glad tidings to the lowly,
to heal the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to captives
and release to prisoners,
To announce a year of favor from the Lord
and a day of vindication by our God.
Isaiah 61:1-2

As a disciple-maker, you bring to a human family full of possibility that Good News which alone can make us whole: Jesus, the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

With the message of Christ and the vision of the Church for our times, you convert and re-convert and share with the people a direction. You invite us to the cost of discipleship, to a commitment not to self but to others. You reflect upon the central and memorable experiences of life in such a way that our brothers and sisters come to understand that the Gospel offers the finest explanation as to the why's and wherefore's of human existence. You make disciples not by reason of your talent, but by reason of the movement of grace and people's innate search for sense, for meaning, for God. As disciple-maker, you are the occasion not the cause: God is the irresistible yearning in the depths of the human soul. "Our hearts are restless, O Lord," says St. Augustine, "until they rest in thee."

If, Brother Art and Brother Al, as prophet you speak-for-God, and as disciple-makers you gather followers, then as mediator you exercise the most delicate task and the one most unique to the ordained priesthood: to speak and listen to God for man and to speak and listen to man for God. In prayer and sacrifice you articulate our aspirations and never let God forget our needs and aspirations. As presider at the Lord's Eucharist, you keep fresh the Holy Word, give us the gift of Finest Wheat and the Precious Blood, and lead us in the celebration of the past, present, and future

of life and history. You lead us to die and rise with Christ in the already and not yet of the Lord's victory. You assist us in the building of community - bringing people together, fostering dialogue, calling forth the ministries of the laity, inciting parochial activity, healing, consoling, counseling, celebrating the ultimate mysteries of life in the sacraments - all because we are called to be one around the Table of the Lord.

Finally, with the office of pastoral leadership - whether as prophet, disciple-maker, or mediator - comes the exercise of pastoral authority. To state it precisely, like the Lord Jesus, whom you uniquely represent as ordained minister and shepherd, you must "speak with authority," and because you represent the Lord, the people must listen.

How I thought of this need for pastoral authority in the recent mayoral elections in this beloved city and my home town of Chicago! Only God can judge consciences, but let me state that the blatant and ugly racism that surfaced warned all of us that we were far from that vision that St. Paul enunciated to the ancient Church of Colossia: "There is no Greek or Jew here, circumcised or uncircumcised, foreigner, Scythian, slave or freeman. Rather, Christ is everything in all of you." (Colossians 3:11) But - and here is the rub - if only over these past

years, the Church of Chicago had heard their pastoral leaders - their priests and good shepherds - speak the truth of the Gospel about the dignity and unity of the human family and lay down their lives for it. then the sin of racism would not be so pervasive and endemic today.

My brothers to be ordained, never think that, because we are in the "age of the laity," (and, thank God we are in the "age of the laity") - the age of parish councils and a host of other consultative bodies - that pastoral leadership is devoid of its prophetic and charismatic character. No, in the area of the Christian Gospel and the Tradition of the Church, you are the servant leader who must never allow the flock to go untended. You are ordained to maintain, foster, and explain a Tradition that is not arrived at by a democratic vote or a Gallup Poll. You are to preserve the "truth of the Tradition" in spite of public polls and opinions and in spite of the counter-cultural nature of its content.

On the other hand, - and here lies the tension - you must know the Tradition well enough to be sensitive to the core-truth within it and the development of doctrine that may unfold in a variety of interpretations and spiritualities.

My dear people of this congregation, you have heard me address these brother directly in this Rite

of Ordination in what the Church terms the "Instruction."

I now address a special word to you.

First, let me take this occasion to express my sincerest appreciation and that of Father Provincial and the Franciscan Friars to the parents^{and family} of Brother ~~Timothy & Anthony~~ Art and Brother Al. ~~Mr. and Mrs. Anderson,~~ and ~~Mr. and Mrs. Haas~~. You have given your sons to the Church and to the Order with the joy and generosity of truly Christian parents. ~~Timothy & Anthony~~ Arthur and Albert have been formed from the stuff of your lives and the depth of your faith. We are profoundly grateful to you and eternally indebted to you and your families. In the words of St. Paul, "I thank God for you always."

And, to everyone here, may I remind you that we come together with the understanding that there is only one High Priest, Jesus Christ, the just intercessor and mediator between God and his people and the Chief Reconciler in the human family. Baptized into the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, all of us - we who are "the faithful" - constitute a "royal priesthood." Each of us shares in this priesthood and lives it out in different ways. Each of us, by reason of baptismal character and immersion into the death and resurrection of Christ, are challenged by that classic exhortation

of St. Paul to become one in faith, hope, and love:

~~Since you have been raised up in company with Christ, set your heart on what pertains to higher realism where Christ is seated at God's right hand . . . Put to death whatever in your nature is rooted in earth . . . Because you are God's chosen ones, clothe yourselves with heartfelt mercy, with kindness, humility, meekness and patience. Over all these virtues put on love, which binds the rest together and makes them perfect.~~

I encourage you, my friends, to exercise your share in the priesthood of Jesus Christ and to work for the transformation of the world and the building up of the Body of Christ. In situations of work, occupation, or profession, in civic, business, and political structures, and in a host of exclusively lay organizations and gatherings - in these instances there is that witness that only lay persons can give. Give Christian witness, then, in sincerity and truth. Rely upon your priests, such as these men to be ordained, to feed you with the Gospel and the teachings of the Church. ~~You said it all so well, Brother Al, when you wrote: "Christian ministry is an obligation of all the baptised; one is sent with a specific mode of liberation to realize and make concrete (Is. 61). Our God has made himself dependent~~

~~upon us both in the Incarnation and, even before that, in the very act of creation. God will not even consider establishing his Kingdom definitively until we, as the baptised, have at least liberated the human family from its own self-made shackles."~~

Know, my friends, and never forget, how much you mean to these men to be ordained. You have inspired them to come thus far, and it has been the example of your lives that has encouraged them in difficult times. Stay with them now and always in the bonds of true friendship.

Let us now continue in the Rite of Ordination. Lend me, all of you, your hearts and your prayers. What the Lord is about to accomplish through me is cast in an ancient ceremony reaching far back to apostolic times. After the Laying on of Hands and the Prayer of Consecration, we as a priestly people shall gather around the Table of the Lord for the Liturgy of the Eucharist, which shall be concelebrated by our newly ordained priests. "O Sacred Banquet, in which Christ is received, the memory of His passion is renewed, and a pledge of future glory is given to us." Come, let us proceed.

The Church of Corpus Christi
Ordination to the Diaconate
December 12, 1983
7:30 p.m.

Dennis Druggan, O.F.M., Cap.
Eugenio Hoyos, C.S.V.
Michael Perry, O.F.M.

"Anyone among you who aspires to greatness must serve the rest, and whoever wants to rank first among you must serve the needs of all."
Matthew 20: 26-27

Introduction - Three principles of Christian Mission
MISSION NEWS - September-October 1983

1. The first principle of Christian mission involves a spirit of openness and trust.
 2. The second principle of Christian mission involves a willingness to learn anew the practical steps of communication.
 3. The third principle of Christian mission is that Christian missionaries are commissioned to minister to people, not to geographical locations.
- I. These principles characterize not only the MISSION but also the MINISTER, the SERVANT LEADER.

Openness, trust, the learning of new praxes of communication, and orientation towards people constitute the inner stuff of the personality of the one called to serve.

It involves:

1. an inner disposition and self-understanding of who I am as a servant: an attitude of mind and heart:

"Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus. He did not cling to his divinity but emptied himself and took on the form of a slave, like us in all things but sin." (Phillipians)

2. a willingness to reconstruct one's inner self;
3. a readiness to be fashioned and formed as a result of our encounters with those with whom we share life;
4. an openness toward conversion, toward a moral and spiritual about face, precisely because we have come to face with the Spirit-filled other, who has also been touched by God and made a communicator of the Divine Will;
5. it involves our receptivity to a Transcendent God who can and will surprise us and who will lead us to ask serious questions about the values we hold and about our understanding of those values
6. it involves discovering the truth about the other and about other peoples and cultures, in such a way that I allow that truth to change me and to expand my mind and heart;
7. finally, it involves the realization that I am an earthen vessel, and, like all that is of earth, I am not a finished product: God is still at work in me

II. My Brothers, it was all such a wonderful intellectual experience for me when I read of Francis' abandoning military life, or embracing the leper, or loving a Brother Giles, until I spent a evening explaining our peace pastoral to wealthy Reagan supporters, or led a pilgrimage of disabled persons to Lourdes, or visited the war torn country of El Salvador. Our Father Francis long ago reminded us that a man knows as much as he does. The "Vita Affectiva," the experiential knowledge, of our Franciscan way teaches us so well that we learn and grow in holiness to the extent that we surrender ourselves to the totality of the other created in God's image and to the extent that we entrust ourselves to a loving Father. This is the ultimate meaning of our poverty: having nothing, so that we can possess all. Thus, to the extent that we can "let go" of all the absolutes we believe about ourselves, the more we can re-construct ourselves as servants who are truly open and fashionable by those to whom we minister. The secret of the true servant of the Lord is not what he (does) for others, but what happens to him in the art of ministering. After all, "it is not oursevles we preach, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake." It is Christ who changes both the minister and those ministered to.

III. My Brothers called to be deacons, I have not dwelled upon a message that is peculiarly diaconal because of the transitional nature of this step for you. I have chosen instead to touch briefly upon some thoughts that can characterize your self-understanding as a servant of the Lord for the rest of your life. Like Moses, you may wish to avoid the task and distress of ministry: "I cannot carry all these people by myself," said Moses. He was quite correct - by himself he could not - and we cannot - meaningfully enter the lives of our people ^{by ourselves.} But if we allow Christ

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to minister to us - for nothing "is beyond the Lord's reach" - then we shall grow in the likeness of Him whom we represent.

Conclusion

My Sisters and Brothers of this assembly, each of us is gifted by the Lord with a task of service within the Church for the sake building the Kingdom of God and making this world ready for the Coming of the Saviour. The Lord questions each of us, "Can you drink of the cup I am to drink of?" Together with these brothers to be ordained, may we respond readily and willingly. In our hearts, may we renew our baptismal vows, as they present themselves to the Lord. May we ^{all} come to the Table of the Lord ready to share the Eucharistic food and become what we choose to eat: the Body of Christ.

Address: Most Reverend James P. Lyke, O.F.M., Ph.D. at the
Ordination of
Anthony Gigliello, O.F.M.
Timothy Schreenan, O.F.M.
Sacred Heart Province

Texts: Micah 5:1-4; Rom. 8:28-30
Matt: 18-23

Feast of the Birth of Mary
September 8, 1984

Brother Anthony and Brother Timothy,

My Brothers and Sisters--"This is the day which the Lord has made;
Let us be glad and rejoice in it! (Ps. 118:24). What a great day for you, Anthony and Timothy! You must be so proud, Mr. and Mrs. Gigliello, Mr. and Mrs. Schreenan--and brothers and sisters, grandparents, aunts and uncles, nieces and nephews, cousins, and friends. On a day like today, friends and relatives come out of the woodwork! Old girl friends shed a final tear, and drinking buddies dry up and stand sober as never before! Strangers smile, and even frogs can sing!

We are all so proud of you, and we all claim to be related to you, for we all want to be part of you and part of what God has wrought in you. As is said of Mary in our ancient Franciscan hymn of praise, we can sing of you today:

Tota pulchra es,

Tu gloria Jerusalem! Tu laetitia Israel!

Tu honorificentia populi nostri!

You are all handsome, you are the joy of Israel, you are the honore of our people!

How fitting it is, Brothers, that you should be ordained on this feast of the Birthday of Mary! How fitting, and how Franciscan.

The readings today remind us of the poverty and littleness of Bethlehem, and the mystery of Christ among us, born first in Mary who among us first knew the Son of God, who bore Him in her humble heart before He became flesh in her body. We celebrate today through Mary the mystery of God among us, deeply rooted in the earth, deeply plunged into our history, our tribes, our customs and traditions, our seasons and times, joys and sorrows, triumphs and sufferings, the burdens of our sinful world, the story of our life and death.

We celebrate today the birth of the one whom the Spirit chose, on whose joyful assent our salvation depends.

The Spirit chooses Mary, and when she says yes, salvation is born into the world. So, we Franciscans call Mary the Best of our Race--in those words once spoken to Judith: "You are the glory of Jerusalem, the surpassing joy of Israel." (Judith 15:8) So, the poet has called her "our tainted nature's solitary boast." and so, we have cherished her as Patroness, Protectress, and Mother, the First among Christians.

Our Father Saint Francis intimately links the Mystery of Mary to the mystery of the Church and the ministry of the priesthood. "If it is right to esteem as worthy the Blessed Virgin Mary because she bore Him in her most holy womb. . ." he writes in his letter to a General Chapter, ". . .how holy, and just, and worthy should not a priest be; he draws forth Christ with his own hands. . . ."

Francis boldly links the dignity of Mary and the priest not because he is a great humanist easily impressed with human stature and accomplishment--but because he is overwhelmed with the humility of God, who lovingly becomes as little as nothingness itself, for our sake. The very Word of God, the all glorious Son of God becomes infinitely small, incarnate within the womb of a lowly virgin, and now in the ministry of the priest, in equal wonder and mystery stoops to become born again in our midst in the hands of a lowly servant of the Church, a "poor little priest of this world." "Oh marvelous dignity and stupendous condescension," St. Francis writes about Christ upon the altar in the hand of a priest. "Oh sublime humility! Oh humble sublimity! That the Lord of the Universe, God and the Son of God, should so humble himself to hide himself for our salvation under a little piece of bread! See, Brothers, the humility of God!"

The mystery of the priesthood continues the mystery of Mary: as in her womb and in her heart--so in our lives and in our ministry: God's presence in the world, since Mary, is possible now only in the littleness of creation. Mary exulted because "He has looked upon the lowliness of His handmaid." (Luke 1:48) God who looked upon the lowliness of Mary His handmaid, reveals the Incarnate word. And God now continues to reveal the same Son of Mary in you, now, today--dear Anthony and Brother Tim, in your own lowliness. The

mystery is the same, "Oh humble sublimity! Oh sublime humility!"

Dear friars--parents, family and friends: it is not just your Timothy and your Anthony who are consecrated, set apart, and blessed today. We all are touched, transformed and changed. For like the shepherds of old, we say to one another: "Come let us go straight to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us." (Luke 2:15) Like Joseph, we enter the mystery of Christ born into the bosom of the Church anew,--in silence, awe and acceptance. With love and pride we see: Christ is born in lowly estate, as truly as in the manger of Bethlehem--in this marvelous new gift of vitality in the Church, in the lives and ministry of these two brothers: in and through them, Christ is born and proclaimed afresh for us all.

Brother Timothy and Brother Anthony, the language and expression we have used up to this point have been sublime and even ethereal, for we were describing transcendental impulses in the expressive tongues of Judaism, the Church's liturgy, and Our Holy Father, St. Francis.

But our God is also an imminent God, so clear from the witness of Mary and Francis, and, above all, from the very meaning of the Incarnation. Now in the following observations I wish to take this imminence of God,--His closeness, His enfleshment, His humanity, and apply it to the priestly charge to be accepted by you.

What does all of this mean for the exercise of your priestly ministry?

First, by vocation a priest is a principal promoter of the "earthing" of Christ, his "rooting" in our world. In our earthly journey you are called to sow the seed which is the Word of God. In your lowliness you will speak for God--because, like Saint Paul, you will learn to be among your sisters and brothers "in weakness and fear", determining to know nothing but "Christ Jesus and Him crucified" (I Cor. 2:2-3) In the cross of Christ, you will find the heart of Christ, in which is hidden "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Col. 2:3)

Brothers, how can you speak to God about your brothers and sisters unless you can read the sufferings of the world and hear its need for God? And, how can you speak of God to the world, unless you can read the sufferings of the Cross of Christ by which He speaks to us and speaks to God on our behalf?

The language of God is love, and its utterance is in the Cross of

Christ, now extended in the suffering of the poor of the world. So if you would hear the voice of God and hear the voice of mankind, you must listen to the world, in its hunger, its thirst, its pain and sorrow. If you would be a teacher, you must always be willing to be taught. The suffering of the world must echo in your hearts in all your prayers and the world itself in all its pain will be your best teacher of God's love and our need.

A second observation. Jesus said to his disciples when He breathed the Holy Spirit upon them: "Do not be afraid." (Matt. 28:10) So He now speaks to you: don't be afraid to be little. Be strong enough to be weak, to share weakness, to admit what you do not know or cannot do. Be independent enough to ask for help, for advice and direction. Be helpful enough to others to really depend upon them and need them. You may feel alone--but you cannot afford to be a loner. You may be misunderstood--but disappointment must not make you bitter. You certainly will make mistakes--do not let fear prevent you from risking them, nor pride keep you from acknowledging them. In short, do not be afraid to be yourselves--uniquely you, the gift that God has given this day to His Church.

A third observation. Jesus's ministry was a service of love expressed in the two-fold ministry of mercy and justice. For example, when we look at the parable of the Good Samaritan, we observe a one-to-one therapeutic ministry of healing, listening, personal touch and personal care. This is the ministry of mercy. But there is also the ministry of justice. The Good Samaritan, after all, broke every custom and law because he respected the dignity of a person who by custom and law was considered less. This task of justice--to break or change the man-made law in favor of a higher, divine law.

Brother Anthony and Brother Timothy, you must exercise in a pastoral way this two-fold ministry. You cannot separate them; you cannot demean either; nor can you relegate your ministry to entirely one: they are both necessary. You cannot be fully pastoral if you are only priests of mercy - taking care of people's immediate needs, - without raising the systemic questions about those realities that keep people poor and disadvantaged and mar the image of God within them.

My dear people of this congregation, you have heard me address these brothers directly in this Rite of Ordination in what the Church terms the "Instruction." I now address a special word to you.

First, let me take this occasion to express my sincerest appreciation and that of the Father Provincial and the Franciscan Friars to the parents and family of Brother Timothy and Brother Anthony. You have given your sons to the Church and to the Order with the joy and generosity of truly Christian parents. Timothy and Anthony have been formed from the stuff of your lives and the depth of your faith. We are profoundly grateful to you and eternally indebted to you and your families. In the words of St. Paul, "I thank God for you always."

And, to everyone here, may I remind you that we come together with the understanding that there is only one High Priest, Jesus Christ, the just intercessor and mediator between God and his people and the Chief Reconciler in the human family. Baptized into the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, all of us - we who are "the faithful" - constitute a "royal priesthood." Each of us shares in this priesthood and lives it out in different ways. Each of us, by reason of baptismal character and immersion into the death and resurrection of Christ, are challenged by that classic exhortation of St. Paul to become one in faith, hope, and love.

I encourage you, my friends, to exercise your share in the priesthood of Jesus Christ and to work for the transformation of the world and the building up of the Body of Christ. In situations of work, occupation, or profession, in civic, business, and political structures, and in a host of exclusively lay organizations and gatherings - in these instances there is that witness that only lay persons can give. Give Christian witness, then, in sincerity and truth. Rely upon your priests, such as these men to be ordained, to feed you with the Gospel and the teachings of the Church.

Know, my friends, and never forget, how much you mean to these men to be ordained. You have inspired them to come thus far, and it has been the example of your lives that has encouraged them in difficult times. Stay with them now and always in the bonds of true friendship.

Let us now continue in the Rite of Ordination. Lend me, all of you, your hearts and your prayers. What the Lord is about to accomplish through me is cast in an ancient ceremony reaching far back to apostolic times. After the Laying on of Hands and the Prayer of Consecration, we as a priestly people shall gather around the Table of the Lord for the Liturgy of the Eucharist,

Ordination, Bro. Anthony and Bro. Timothy
September 8, 1984
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which shall be concelebrated by our newly ordained priests. "O Sacred Banquet, in which Christ is received, the memory of His passion is renewed, and a pledge of future glory is given to us." Come, let us proceed.

The Ordination to the Priesthood
Friar David E. Johnson, O.F.M.
Friar Ben R. Innes, O.F.M.
The Church of Saint Christopher
North Las Vegas, Nevada
1:00 p.m.
December 29, 1984

Isaiah 61: 1-3
1 Peter 4: 7-11
John 15: 9-17

The Most Reverend James P. Lyke, O.F.M., Ph.D.

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Before I address Friar David and Friar Ben, may I acknowledge the historic nature of this particular Ordination to the Priesthood.

First of all, we welcome with special affection Father John Vaughn, the Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor. This is the first time in the history of the Order in the United States that an American Minister General is present at a Rite of Ordination. Father General, know that we shall always double our prayers in your behalf and offer you our fraternal support and obedience.

Secondly, the Friars have served in the Diocese of Las Vegas for fourteen years, but this is the first time that the Ordination of our friars shall take place here in Las Vegas.

And finally, I cannot help but note the significance of my own presence here, an African-American friar and bishop, who presides at this Rite of Ordination in a Community of Faith so reflective of the spiritual riches of Black Catholics and among whom our Franciscan ministry of justice and peace was appropriately initiated by Father

Ordination
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Louie, now the Provincial of the Santa Barbara Province.
Father Provincial, we greet you with love and devotion.

Dear people of this congregation, at the outset, in the name of the Church and of the Franciscan Province of Santa Barbara, let me express my gratitude to all who have been instrumental in Friar Ben and Friar David's journey to priesthood.

My sincerest appreciation to Friar David's parents, Ockle and Catherine Johnson and his family and to Friar Ben's mother Lorraine Anstrom and her family. Parents, these friars have been formed from the stuff of your lives and the quality of your faith. We are profoundly grateful and eternally indebted to you and your families. Friar David, I am sure that what you wrote of your parents applies to Friar Ben's parents as well. You said, "Religion was important in my family and I still marvel at people whose lives are transformed by the grace and gospel of Jesus Christ."

Friar David and Friar Ben, I now wish to address you directly, in the context and spirit of the sacred readings of today's Liturgy. Jesus tells you, "It was not you who chose me, it was I who chose you, to go forth and bear fruit."

My brothers, to be a priest is to be called and chosen to stand with women and men as their helper and guide;

to preach the Word; to celebrate the mysteries, to ponder life's deepest realities and to raise life's critical questions and to critique its answers; to be called and chosen as a priest is to stand with outstretched arms and hearts, as on a cross.

As you personify both this calling and mission "to be generous distributors of God's manifold grace" and to "put your gifts at the service of one another" as the Lord's ordained priests, you are in a most unique way challenged to that "greater love which no one has than to lay down one's life for one's friends," to love the People of God as Christ did himself.

Friar David and Friar Ben, as you undertake this challenge of priestly love, may I offer you three personal convictions for your consideration.

First, do not fear to be who you are uniquely called to be and to do what you are uniquely called to do. Christ himself did not hesitate to pull the Twelve apart from the people - to address them in a special way, with a special word, and to give them a special task. He did not hesitate to pray - just with them. You are now called to be an intimate collaborator in the preaching of the Gospel: do not pull back from the demands and challenges of that intimacy. Even when you falter or fall, remember - you remain the Lord's prized and special envoy.

He shall always be with you. (Confer Romans 12:1-9)

Secondly, this is the age of personal fulfillment and individual freedom, of personal goals and individual accomplishments, of pleasure and comfort. Particularly as a Franciscan priest, you are the sign of a different focus: that other-directedness which was the chief characteristic of the life of Christ and of our Holy Father, Francis of Assisi. Your treasures, Friar David and Friar Ben, must be the poor, the hungry, the homeless and the unemployed, orphans, widows, and the lonely; our often-aimless and always-searching youth; the used and abused, the neglected and rejected, the "least" of our brothers and sisters. Your treasures, too, must be the hurting people and people longing for healing - those who have not heard the Gospel, the unchurched, alienated Catholics, single parents, our divorced and separated brothers and sisters. All this reflects the words of Isaiah the Prophet, words subsequently employed by Jesus himself to describe an essential aspect of His ministry and, therefore, that of the Church and of yours: "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me" and sent me to the lowly, the prisoners, the brokenhearted.

Thirdly, remember that your ministry takes place "in the world" - in all of the unredeemed spheres of human existence. Friar Ben, this is what I think you meant when you wrote, "I readily accept the sacramental role of the

priest, but see the need to be more than a dispenser of sacraments." It is to the world that the message of salvation must be given; it is with the world that the power and folly of the cross as well as the radiant hope of the resurrection must be shared. I state this to assert that there is nothing "otherworldly" about your ministry or about the Christian life. In his Solemn prayer, Jesus affirmed, "They do not belong to the world. . . they are not of the world. . ., in order to instruct us that the signs of death - pride, envy, anger, greed, lust, intemperance, injustice, violence, and so on - are inconsonant with the Christian way. But with equal vigor, Jesus begs the Father, "I do not ask you to take them out of the world. . . As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world." (Confer, John 17:1-19)

My brothers, do not shrink from the world, do not withdraw from its pains and groans. This unredeemed, conflict-ridden world of loveless lives, empty hearts, inquiring minds, broken families, estranged minorities, and international tensions and violence - do not run from this world into an "other world." The "other world" does not need the Gospel; this world does.

It is out of the experience of this world that the fundamental life questions are asked: Who is the human person? What is the meaning and purpose of our lives?

What is goodness and what is sin? Where lies the path to true happiness? What is the truth about death, judgement, and retribution beyond the grave? What, finally, is that ultimate and unutterable mystery which engulfs our beings?¹

My brothers, this is the world and the life experience that needs the Gospel. The Gospel can dispel our doubts, fears, and anxieties. The Gospel can transform our ways and remake and revive our consciences. The Gospel can bring meaning and joy to our empty lives. The Gospel can bring peace and hope to a materialistic, crisis-filled world.

I repeat - your ministry takes place "in the world." Do not shrink from this world, its anxieties and its hopes.

My brothers and sisters of the sacred assembly, every Eucharist represents the clarity of Jesus' identity and the boldness of His in-breaking into the world, for in these humble signs of bread and wine the mystery of divine intervention in an unredeemed world is re-enacted. May each of us here be nourished by this Eucharistic food, that our share in the priestly and prophetic service of Christ may lead the world to that salvation for which it so deeply longs. All of us yearn for a universe in which the fullness of Christ's order and redemption is experience.

¹Confer "Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions" of the II Vatican Council.

In the words of the poet, Langston Hughes - and, my Brothers
David and Ben, we depend upon you ---

I dream a world where man
No other will scorn,
Where love will bless the earth
And peace its paths adorn.
I dream a world where all
Will know sweet freedom's way,
Where greed no longer saps the soul
Nor avarice blights our day,
A world I dream where black or white,
Whatever race you be,
Will share the bounties of the earth
And every man is free,
Where wretchedness will hang its head,
And joy, like a pearl,
Attend the needs of all mankind.
Of such I dream -
Our world.

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
Because he has anointed me."

ISAIAH 61:1-3; 6;
8-9

ISAIAH 61:1

PETER 4:7-11
MATTHEW 20: 25-28

ORDINATION INSTRUCTION
FR. ELRIC SAMPSON, O.F.M.

CORPUS CHRISTI CHURCH
CHICAGO: 1 JUNE 1985

Omit underlining

DEAR BROTHER ELRIC: WHAT A JOY IT IS FOR ME TO BE WITH YOU TODAY--A BLESSED DAY IN A BLESSED PLACE. FOR HERE IN CORPUS CHRISTI CHURCH--WHAT MEMORIES YOU HAVE: INTO THIS COMMUNITY YOU AND YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS WERE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST'S FELLOWSHIP, CONFIRMED IN HIS SPIRIT, AND HERE YOU WERE FIRST ENRICHED WITH HIS BODY AND BLOOD. BEFORE THIS ALTAR YOU SHARED THE JOY AND BLESSING OF YOUR SISTER AND TWO BROTHERS WHEN THEY CONSECRATED THEIR LIVES IN THE PLEDGES OF MARRIED LOVE. ~~AND~~ HERE THE CHURCH SHARED YOUR SORROW AND TEARS WHEN YOU LOVINGLY COMMITTED THE EARTHLY REMAINS OF YOUR MOTHER AND YOUNGEST BROTHER TO REST IN THE LORD. HERE THE FELLOWSHIP OF THIS PARISH COMMUNITY, ~~AND THAT OF FRIENDS AND FAMILY ACROSS THIS CITY AND NATION~~ CONTINUES TO BE BLESSED AND ENRICHED BY YOUR FATHER'S FAITHFUL LIFE OF LOVE. SO MUCH TREASURE OF GOD IS HERE ~~IN~~ YOUR LIFE, BROTHER ELRIC. WE JOYFULLY GREET YOUR FAMILY--ALL OF THEM, THOSE PRESENT AND THOSE WITH THE LORD--WITH OUR GRATITUDE AND LOVE. ~~ESPECIALLY THOSE FROM MEMPHIS.~~ *We greet, too, family AND FRIENDS FROM AROUND this city AND ACROSS the nation.*

~~AND~~ HERE YOU ARE TODAY, BROTHER ELRIC. HARDLY BELIEVING IT, HERE YOU ARE--AMONG YOUR OWN: AMONG THEM, FROM THEM--AND NOW BY GOD'S GRACE, FOR US ALL. ~~FOR~~ YOU ANSWER AN ANCIENT PROPHETIC GOSPEL CALL, DEAR BROTHER--TO GO FORTH TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD, TO PREACH THE GOOD NEWS, TO TEACH, TO HEAL, TO GATHER, TO RECONCILE, ~~AND~~ TO PRESENT GOOD GIFTS TO THE LORD, AND TO ANNOUNCE A YEAR OF FAVOR. YOU GO FORTH TO THE

ISAIAH 61:1-3;
6:8-9)

PEOPLE OF GOD, THE PEOPLE--AS MANY AS THE LORD
 OUR GOD SHALL CALL TO HIMSELF. THE LIMIT OF YOUR
 CALL IS NO LESS THAN THE RANGE OF THE OUTPOURED
 BLOOD OF CHRIST, AND YOUR HEART MUST NOW BE STRETCHED
 AND PIERCED THROUGH AND THROUGH AS EVER SO WIDE
 AS HIS.

YOUR HEART, BROTHER ELRIC--I KNOW IS BIG AND
 WIDE: AS WIDE AND AS BIG AS THE ^{AFRICAN-American} PEOPLE YOU COME FROM,
 AND THE PEOPLE YOU ARE CALLED TO SERVE. YOUR LOVE
 IS SO EVIDENT IN THE LETTER YOU WROTE TO ME,
 EXPRESSING YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT THIS GREAT DAY OF
 YOUR CALL TO THE PRIESTHOOD. PRIESTHOOD AND LOVE,
 PRIESTHOOD AND PEOPLE ARE IDEAS THAT ARE INSEPARABLE
 IN YOUR HEART. LISTEN TO YOUR OWN WORDS THAT I READ:

"MY UNDERSTANDING OF PRIESTHOOD IS TIED TO MY
 UNDERSTANDING OF COMMUNITY... WHEN I PREACH
 AT CORPUS CHRISTI... I LOOK OUT AT THOSE FACES
 I GREW UP WITH, THESE ARE MY PEOPLE, WE HAVE A
 COMMON HISTORY, WE SHARE THE SAME ROOTS. I BREAK
 OPEN THE WORD AND SHARE MY LIFE AND FAITH AS
 ONE OF THEM..."

"THE PRIEST IS SOMEONE WHO IS PART OF THE
 COMMUNITY HE SERVES. A PRIEST MUST BE SOMEONE
 WHO FUNCTIONS FROM WITHIN, WHO PARTICIPATES FULLY
 IN THE LIFE OF HIS COMMUNITY. THE PRIEST MINISTERS
 TO HIS PEOPLE BECAUSE HE IS PART OF THEM, THEIR
 LIFE IS HIS LIFE, THEIR CONCERNS ARE HIS CONCERNS...."

[LETTER OF MAY 8, 1985]

*In your relationship with the People of God, the exhortation of St. Peter rings true: "...let your love for one another be constant.... be mutually hospitable... put your gifts at the service of one another...." (1 Peter 4: 7-11)

ELRIC P. 3

YES INDEED--THE PEOPLE ARE YOUR STRENGTH,
BROTHER ELRIC, BECAUSE IN THEM YOU FIND THE HIDDEN
TREASURES OF GOD'S LOVE. THERE YOU ILLUMINE WITH
GOD'S RECONCILING WORD THE DARKNESS OF SIN, AND
ENKINDLE AFRESH THE LIGHT OF FAITH AND HOPE. THERE
YOU GATHER THE LOAVES OF GOD'S BOUNTY AND BLESS THE
CUP OF JOY IN THE LOVING FELLOWSHIP OF CHRIST'S
BROKEN BODY AND OUTPOURED BLOOD. YOUR MINISTRY
IS SUSTAINED BY THE PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE YOU
GATHER, AND EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT WHO DWELLS DEEP
WITHIN THEIR HEARTS AND THEIR HUNGERS AND LONGINGS.

THE PEOPLE YOU SERVE ARE POOR, ^{IN SPIRIT} BROTHER ELRIC,
AND SO ARE YOU CALLED TO BE POOR WITH THEM AND
YOU ARE CALLED, WITH THEM AND IN THEIR COMPANY,
TO DISCOVER AFRESH THE GRACE OR GIFT OF GOSPEL
POVERTY--WHICH ST. PAUL CALLS THE POVERTY OF CHRIST:

"FOR YOU KNOW THE GRACE ~~[THE GIFT]~~ OF OUR
LORD JESUS CHRIST, THAT THOUGH HE WAS RICH,
YET FOR YOUR SAKES HE BECAME POOR, SO THAT YOU
THROUGH HIS POVERTY MIGHT BECOME RICH." [2 COR. 8:9]

YOUR POOR PEOPLE ARE RICH IN THE POVERTY WHICH IS
THE GIFT OF CHRIST! AND, AS THEY ARE, AND ARE CALLED
TO BE, SO MUST YOU BE, AND EVER STRIVE TO BECOME.

YOU ARE A POOR MAN, BROTHER ELRIC--BY THE GIFT
OF YOUR BIRTH INTO A POOR PEOPLE, WITH A HERITAGE
AND HISTORY OF POVERTY; BY REASON OF YOUR FRANCISCAN
PROFESSION, AND NOW BY YOUR APOSTOLIC CALL TO PRIESTLY
SERVICE.

As a bearer and sharer of God's gifts, your priestly life shall respond to Jesus' mandate: "Anyone among you who aspires to greatness must serve the rest, and whoever wants to rank first among you must serve the needs of all." (Mt. 20:27)

ELRIC P. 4

WE BLACK BISHOPS OF THE UNITED STATES IN OUR PASTORAL LETTER OF LAST SEPTEMBER 9TH, "WHAT WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD" ~~WHICH WE WROTE TO OUR BLACK BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH,~~ CALLED OUR PEOPLE TO THIS SAME RENEWAL OF SPIRIT, AND A NEW AWARENESS OF GOSPEL POVERTY IMPLICIT IN THE GOSPEL CALL TO SHARE OUR GIFTS WITH THE PEOPLE OF GOD. BROTHER ELRIC, THIS CALL TO SHARE OUR GIFTS IS INDEED A CALL TO BE POOR WITH CHRIST: TO BE THE GIFT THAT WE ARE, AND TO GIVE THE GIFT THAT WE RECEIVE.

THUS WE ARE ALL CALLED TO SEE ANEW--THAT TO BE TRULY GIFTED--IS TO BE POOR IN THE GOSPEL SENSE. POVERTY AND GIFTEDNESS GO TOGETHER--THE SAME WAY YOU NOTICED HOW PEOPLE AND PRIESTHOOD GO TOGETHER. YOU CANNOT HAVE A TRUE PEOPLE WITHOUT A PRIESTHOOD. SO, YOU CANNOT HAVE TRUE GIFTEDNESS--UNLESS YOU KNOW HOW TO RECEIVE A GIFT AND GIVE A GIFT--THAT IS, UNLESS YOU KNOW HOW TO BE POOR LIKE CHRIST--WHO RECEIVED ALL FROM HIS HEAVENLY FATHER, AND WHO GAVE ALL --ABUNDANCE UPON ABUNDANCE--THAT HE HAD SO ABUNDANTLY RECEIVED.

TO BE POOR IS TO HUNGER FOR THAT WHICH WE HAVE, AND THAT WHICH WE ARE. THOSE WHO SAY THEY ARE FULL, RICH, AND HAVE NEED OF NOTHING [CF. REV. 3: 17FF]--ARE TRULY THOSE WHO HUNGER AND THIRST NO MORE, WHO HAVE FORGOTTEN WHAT IT MEANS TO BE NEEDY, AND THEY SOON FORGET WHAT THEY HAVE AND FORGET WHO THEY ARE. RECEIVING NOTHING, THEY HAVE NOTHING TO GIVE.

TO BE POOR IS TO OWN THE GIFT. IF YOU ARE NOT POOR, NOTHING IS A GIFT, EVERYTHING IS TAKEN FOR GRANTED, AND THERE IS NOTHING TO GIVE. ONLY THE POOR CAN GIVE THANKS, FOR ONLY THEY KNOW HOW MUCH THEY ARE BEHOLDEN. ONLY THOSE WHO KNOW HOW MUCH THEY HAVE RECEIVED, ARE AWARE OF HOW MUCH THEY HAVE TO GIVE. ONLY THE POOR KNOW HOW PRECIOUS IS THE GIFT OF LIFE--FOR THE POOR HUNGER TO EXIST, LONG TO BELONG, YEARN TO BE FREE, SEARCH AND SEEK TO BE FOUND, CHERISH THE VERY LONGINGS OF THE SPIRIT TREASURED UP IN THE HEART, IN ITS HISTORY, MUSIC AND LANGUAGE, SORROWS AND LAUGHTERS, LOSSES AND LOVES. ONLY THE POOR CAN TREASURE THE GIFT--FRAGILE AND AS EASILY LOST AS GRATITUDE CAN BE FORGOTTEN.

THE RICH ARE THOSE WHO HAVE FORGOTTEN THE GIFT. THEY ARE DULLED PERHAPS FROM GRASPING TOO MUCH AND CLUTCHING TOO LONG--THE SENSES OF THE HEART ARE BLINDED AND DEAFENED. THOSE WHO ARE NOT POOR WEIGH WHAT THEY HAVE IN MEASURES OF NUMBERS: COINS COUNTED OF SILVER AND GOLD, BARNs BUILT TO ACCUMULATE; ARMIES GATHERED, LOCKS AND BOLTS, GUNS AND BOMBS STOCKPILED TO DEFEND THAT WHICH WE DO NOT NEED AND DENY TO OTHERS WHO DO, WHICH WE ENDLESSLY, OBSCENELY, RELENTLESSLY HOARD TO OURSELVES.

WE TOO ARE RICH, WHEN WE FORGET THE GIFT OF WHAT WE HAVE AND WHO WE ARE, AND CLING TO A REMORSELESS

PURSUIT OF MORE AND MORE, AND AN EMBITTERED DEFENCE OF WHAT IS NOT RIGHTLY OURS. ~~MEANLY WE CONFUSE HUNGER AND THIRST FOR JUSTICE, WITH A SELF-SERVING AND UNGRACIOUS DISCONTENT WITH WHO WE REALLY ARE, AND WHAT WE ARE CALLED TO BE.~~

SAINT FRANCIS IN ALL HUMILITY AND SIMPLICITY AND JOY, OVER AND OVER AGAIN PROCLAIMED: "A MAN IS WHO HE IS IN THE SIGHT OF GOD, THAT AND NOTHING ELSE." YOU WILL BE TRUE TO OUR FATHER FRANCIS, BROTHER ELRIC, IF YOU ONLY HUNGER AND THIRST TO HAVE WHAT IS YOURS TO HAVE, TO GIVE WHAT YOU HAVE, AND TO BE WHAT YOU ARE.

HERE THE GIFT OF YOUR GOSPEL POVERTY COMES ALIVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE GIFT OF YOUR PRIESTLY CALL. ^{FRANCISCAN} A POOR MAN YOURSELF; YOU CAN CALL THE PEOPLE OF GOD TO REJOICE IN THE GIFT OF CHRIST, IN THE POVERTY THAT MAKES US RICH IN THE GIFT OF BUILDING UP THE BODY. THE POVERTY THAT IS YOUR PRIESTLY GIFT WILL--IN YOUR OWN WORDS, MAKE YOU "RECOGNIZE THE TALENTS AND GIFTS WITHIN [THE] COMMUNITY AND ENABLE THE PEOPLE TO PLACE THESE GIFTS AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE ENTIRE PARISH COMMUNITY"--FOR YOU WILL BE MORE CONCERNED WITH ENABLING OTHERS, THAN IN BEING ENABLED YOURSELF-- LIGHTING OTHER LIGHTS TO SHINE, THAN IN TURNING ON YOUR OWN SPARKLES. JOHN THE BAPTIST'S PRAYER WILL BE YOURS: "HE MUST INCREASE, BUT I MUST DECREASE." [JOHN 3:30]

THIS POVERTY OF SPIRIT WILL FILL YOUR MINISTRY AS IT FILLS THE PRAYER OF ST. FRANCIS, TEACHING YOU TO "SEEK NOT SO MUCH TO BE CONSOLED, AS TO CONSOLE;" TO BE UNDERSTOOD, AS TO UNDERSTAND; TO BE LOVED, AS TO LOVE; FOR IT IS IN GIVING THAT WE RECEIVE, IT IS IN PARDONING THAT WE ARE PARDONED; IT IS IN DYING THAT WE ARE BORN TO ETERNAL LIFE."

YES, BROTHER ELRIC, IN THE END, OUR POVERTY IS EMBRACING THE VERY CROSS OF CHRIST, THE VERY DEATH OF CHRIST--CRUCIFIED, ST. PAUL TELLS US, ~~ON ACCOUNT OF WEAKNESS~~, [2 COR. 13:4]. YOUR ORDINATION HERE TODAY IS NO MORE, NOR LESS, THAN A SHARING IN THIS POVERTY, THIS DEATH OF CHRIST. IN CHRIST YOU DIE THIS DAY--TO MANY THINGS, TO YOURSELF. IN CHRIST YOU RISE, AND WITH YOU AND THIS NEW MINISTRY, YOUR PEOPLE RISE TO NEW LIFE. YOU DIE, FOR YOU WILL NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN--AND NEITHER WILL WE. ONLY CHRIST IS THE SAME YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW. IN HIM WE LIVE. IN HIM WE DIE. IN HIM--LIVING AND DYING--MAY WE EVER BE.

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Sisters and Brothers of ^{this} ~~the~~ Sacred Assembly, you are here today because Brother Elric has a special place in your hearts, and because you hold dear and blessed the call to ordained ministry. In the name of the Church and the Franciscan Province of the Sacred Heart, I personally thank you for this affection and respect.

But I am impelled to add:

There is only one High Priest, Jesus Christ, and in our sharing in this one priesthood we are by Baptism all priests - a "royal priesthood," Saint Peter calls us.

Brothers and Sisters, as I lay hands upon our Brother Elric, recall the intimate relationship you have with Christ the High Priest, and the Spirit-filled power and mission that flow from your Baptism.

^{When}

~~As~~ you approach the Eucharistic Table, place your own priestly heart and offer your own bodies with the eternal Victim and Priest, -- for "in all of you God is to be glorified through Jesus Christ: TO HIM BE GLORY AND DOMINION THROUGHOUT THE AGES. AMEN." (I Peter 4: 11)

The Rite of Ordination
to the Sacred Priesthood
Brother Elric Sampson, O.F.M.
Corpus Christi Church
Chicago, Illinois
June 1, 1985

Isaiah 61:1-3; 6:8-9
1 Peter 4:7-11
Matthew 20:25-28

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because
He has anointed me." Isaiah 61:1

Dear Brother Elric: What a joy it is for me to be with you today--A blessed day in a blessed place. For here in Corpus Christi Church--what memories you have; into this community you and your brothers and sisters were baptized into Christ's fellowship, confirmed in His Spirit, and here you were first nourished with His Body and Blood. Before this altar you shared the joy and blessing of your sister and two brothers when they consecrated their lives in the pledges of married love. Here the church shared your sorrow and tears when you lovingly committed the earthly remains of your mother and youngest brother to rest in the Lord. Here the fellowship of this parish community continues to be blessed and enriched by your father's faithful life of love. So much treasure of God is here in your life, Brother Elric. We joyfully greet your family--all of them, those present and those with the Lord--with our gratitude and love. We greet, too, family and friends from around the city and across the nation, especially those from Memphis.

Here you are today, Brother Elric. Hardly believing it, here you are--among your own: among them, from them--and now by God's grace, for them and for us all, you answer an ancient prophetic call, dear brother--to go forth to the people of God, to preach the good news, to teach, to proclaim liberty, to hear, to gather, to reconcile, to present good gifts to the Lord, and to announce a year of favor. (Isaiah 61:1-3;6;8-9) You go forth to the people of God, the people--as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself. The limit of your call is no less than the range of the outpoured blood of Christ, and your heart must now be stretched and pierced through and through as ever so wide as His.

Your heart, Brother Elric--I know is big and wide: as wide and as big as the African-American people you come from and the people you are called to serve. Your love is so evident in the letter you wrote to me, expressing your thoughts about this great day of your call to the priesthood. Priesthood and love, priesthood and people are ideas that are inseparable in your heart. Listen to your own words that I read:

"My understanding of priesthood is tied to my understanding of community... when I preach at Corpus Christi...I look out at those faces I grew up with, these are my people, we have common history, we

share the same roots. I break open
the word and share my life and faith
as one of them....

"The priest is someone who is part of the
community he serves. A priest must be some-
one who functions from within, who participates
fully in the life of his community. The priest
ministers to his people because he is part of
them, their life is his life, their concerns
are his concerns....."(Letter of May 8, 1985)

Yes, indeed--the people are your strength, Brother
Elric, because in them you find the hidden treasures of God's
love. There you illumine with God's reconciling Word the
darkness of sin, and enkindle afresh the light of faith and
hope. There you gather the loaves of God's bounty and bless
the cup of joy in the loving fellowship of Christ's broken
body and out-poured blood. Your ministry is sustained by the
prayer of the people you gather, and empowered by the Spirit
who dwells deep within their hearts and their hungers and
longings.

In your relationship with the people of God, the exhortation
of St. Peter rings true:"...let your love for one another be
constant... be mutually hospitable... put your gifts at the
service of one another...." (1 Peter 4:7-11)

The people you serve are poor in spirit, Brother
Elric, and so are you called to be poor with them and you
are called, with them and in their company, to discover

afresh the grace or gift Gospel Poverty--which St. Paul calls the Poverty of Christ:

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich." (2 Cor.8:9)

Your poor people are rich in the poverty which is the Gift of Christ! And, as they are, and are called to be, so must you be, and ever strive to become.

You are a poor man, Brother Elric--by the gift of your birth into a poor people, with a heritage and history of poverty; by reason of your Franciscan Profession, and now by your apostolic call to priestly service.

We Black Bishops of the United States in our pastoral letter of last September 9th, "What We Have Seen And Heard" called our people to this same renewal of spirit, and a new awareness of Gospel Poverty implicit in the gospel call to share our gifts with the people of God. Brother Elric, this call to share our gifts is indeed a call to be poor with Christ: to be the gift that we are, and to give the gift that we receive. As a bearer and sharer of God's gifts, your priestly life shall respond to Jesus' mandate:

"Anyone among you who aspires to greatness must serve the rest, and whoever wants to rank first among you must serve the needs of all." (Matthew 20:27)

Thus we are all called to see anew--that to be truly gifted--is to be poor in the gospel sense. Poverty and giftedness go together--the same way you noticed how people

and priesthood go together. You cannot have a true people without a priesthood. So, you cannot have true giftedness-- unless you know how to receive a gift and give a gift--that is unless you know how to be poor like Christ--who received all from His Heavenly Father, and who gave all-abundance upon abundance--that He had so abundantly received.

To be poor is to HUNGER for that which we have, and that which we are. Those who say they are full, rich, and have nothing (cf. Rev. 3:17ff)--are truly those who hunger and thirst no more, who have forgotten what it means to be needy, and they soon forget what they have and forget who they are. Receiving nothing, they have nothing to give.

To be poor is to own the gift. If you are not poor, nothing is a gift, everything is taken for granted, and there is nothing to give. Only the poor can give thanks, for only they know how much they are beholden. Only those who know how much they have received, are aware of how much they have to give. Only the poor know how precious is the gift of life--for the poor hunger to exist, long to belong, yearn to be free, search and seek to be found, cherish the very longings of the spirit treasured up in the heart, in its history, music and language, sorrows and laughters, losses and loves. Only the poor can treasure the gift--fragile and as easily lost as gratitude can be forgotten.

The rich are those who have forgotten the gift. They are dulled perhaps from grasping too much and clutching

too long--the senses of the heart are blinded and deafened. Those who are not poor weight what they have in measures of numbers: coins counted of silver and gold, barns built to accumulate; armies gathered, locks and bolts, guns and bombs stockpiled to defend that which we do not need and deny to others who do, which we endlessly, obscenely, and relentlessly hoard to ourselves.

We too are rich, when we forget the gift of what we have and who we are, and cling to a remorseless pursuit of more and more, and an embittered defense of what is not rightly ours.

Saint Francis in all humility and simplicity and joy, over and over again proclaimed: "A man is who he is in the sight of God, that and nothing else." You will be true to our Father Francis, Brother Elric, if you only hunger and thirst to have what is yours to have, to give what you have, and to be what you are.

Here the gift of your Gospel Poverty comes alive in the Holy Spirit in the gift of your priestly call. A Franciscan poor man yourself, you can call the people of God to rejoice in the gift of Christ, in the poverty that makes us rich in the gift of building up the body. The poverty that is your priestly gift will--in your own words, make you "recognize the talents and gifts within (the) community and enable the people to place these gifts at the disposal of the entire parish community"-- for you

will be more concerned with enabling others, than in being enabled yourself--lighting other lights to shine, then in turning on your own sparkles. John the Baptist's prayer will be yours: "He must increase, but I must decrease."

(John 3:30)

This poverty of spirit will fill your ministry as it fills the prayer of St. Francis, teaching you to "seek not so much to be consoled, as to console; to be understood, as to understand; to be loved, as to love; for it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; it is in dying that we are born to eternal life."

Yes, Brother Elric, in the end, our poverty is embracing the very Cross of Christ, the very death of Christ--crucified, St. Paul tells us (2 Cor. 13:4). Your ordination here today is no more, nor less, than a sharing in this poverty, this death of Christ. In Christ you die this day--to many things, to yourself. In Christ you rise, and with you and this new ministry, your people rise to New life. You die, for you will never be the same again--and neither will we. Only Christ is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. In Him, we live. In Him, we die. In Him--living and dying may we ever be.

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HOLY NAME PROVINCE ORDINATION
19 OCTOBER 1985
ST. CAMILLUS' CHURCH
WASHINGTON, D.C.

JER. 1: 4-9
2 COR. 5: 14-20
JOHN 15: 9-16

FIVE FRANCISCANS:
MICHAEL RIESTER
PETER BROPHY
AUBREY MCNEIL
THOMAS VIGLIOTTA
MIGUEL SEPULVEDA

"WE RELY ON THE HELP OF THE LORD GOD AND
OUR SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST, AND WE CHOOSE
THESE MEN, OUR BROTHERS, FOR PRIESTHOOD
IN THE PRESBYTERAL OFFICE" [RITE OF ORDINATION]
I HAVE JUST CHOSEN YOU--AND THE APPLAUSE
OF ALL YOUR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS AND CONFRERES--SHOWS
THAT WE ALL CHOOSE YOU--IN THE NAME OF GOD'S PEOPLE,
IN THE NAME OF CHRIST, IN THE NAME OF GOD.

NOW IT IS OUT, MY BROTHERS: MICHAEL, PETER,
AUBREY, THOMAS, MIGUEL--WHAT WAS KNOWN BY GOD BEFORE
YOU WERE FORMED IN YOUR MOTHERS' WOMBS--NOW IT IS
OUT--YOU WERE KNOWN, YOU WERE DEDICATED, YOU WERE
APPOINTED--AS JEREMIAH THE PROPHET BEFORE YOU--FOR
THIS, OUR DAY, OUR AGE, OUR WORLD.....

THE WORLD WILL NEVER BE THE SAME, YOU WILL
NEVER BE THE SAME, FOR YOU ARE CHOSEN, SELECTED,
ELECTED--TAKEN FROM AMONG THE PEOPLE, AND APPOINTED
FOR THE THINGS OF GOD. LIKE JEREMIAH'S PROPHET-TO-
THE-NATIONS--YOU ARE THIS DAY ELECTED, AND THIS DAY
AN ANCIENT TRUTH BECOMES SHIMMERING AND NEW: THAT
GOD IN CHRIST IS RECONCILING THE WHOLE WORLD TO
HIMSELF, AND ENTRUSTING NOW THIS WORD OF RECONCILIATION

TO THE POWERFUL DEEDS AND WORDS OF YOUR APOSTOLIC AND PASTORAL MINISTRY.

THE ANCIENT SYMBOLS THE SPIRIT GAVE TO THE PEOPLE FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED--ARE TENDERLY, TRUSTINGLY LAID INTO YOUR HANDS--THE BREAD, THE CUP OF WINE, THE ANOINTING OILS, THE SACRED SCRIPTURES--BOOKS, WORDS, SOUNDS, SMELLS, TOUCHES, VESTMENTS--ARE LAID ABOUT YOU AND UPON YOU WITH THE URGENT PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD AND THE OVERPOWERING SHADOW OF THE BROODING SPIRIT OF GOD....

TAKE WHAT WE HAVE TO GIVE, TAKE WHAT WAS PASSED ON TO US, TAKE THE BELIEF OF THE CHURCH, THE CREED OF GOD'S PEOPLE. TAKE THE BREAD OF THE HUNGER OF THE WANDERING PEOPLE WHO FOUND NO SATISFACTION IN THE MANNA OF THE WILDERNESS. TAKE THE CUP OF THOSE WHO THIRST FOR JUSTICE AND FREEDOM AND PEACE, AND LONG TO OVERFLOW WITH THE SPIRIT OF GOD. TAKE THE SACRED WRITINGS OF THE INSPIRED AUTHORS. TAKE THE BURDENS OF GOD'S PEOPLE: HEAR THEIR CRIES AS YOU LISTEN TO THEIR SINS, FEEL THEIR HURTS AS YOU TOUCH THEIR WOUNDS; TAKE THE WORD OF GOD AND BREAK IT OPEN IN YOUR HEART SO THAT IT MAY FILL THE TOUCHES OF YOUR HANDS AND THE UTTERANCES OF YOUR MOUTHS WITH THE OVERWHELMING BLESSINGS OF GOD'S PEACE.

YOU WOULD HARDLY BE HUMAN--MICHAEL, PETER, AUBREY, THOMAS, MIGUEL--IF YOU WERE NOT OVERWHELMED BY THIS DAY. THE PSALMIST MIGHT HAVE BEEN THINKING

OF YOU WHEN HE WROTE:

YOU CLOSE ME IN, BEHIND AND BEFORE;
YOU HAVE LAID YOUR HAND UPON ME.
SUCH KNOWLEDGE IS TOO WONDERFUL FOR ME,
IT IS ALTOGETHER TOO MUCH,
TOO HIGH FOR ME TO GRASP.
WHERE CAN I GO FROM YOUR SPIRIT?
WHERE CAN I FLEE FROM YOUR PRESENCE?

[Ps. 139: 5-7]

WHEN YOU LOOK AT THE FACES OF THOSE YOU LOVE TODAY--
THE PRIDE YOU SEE IN YOUR DAD'S EYES, THE TEARS OF YOUR
MOTHER AND UNCLES AND AUNTS, WHEN YOU SEE YOUR
LITTLE BROTHER BITE HIS LIPS TO STRUGGLE WITH HIS
TEARS, HOLDING BACK WORDS HE CANNOT REALLY EXPRESS--
IT IS ALMOST TOO MUCH TO BEAR. WHEN YOU HEAR THE
SOLEMN WORDS THE CHURCH UTTERS TO YOU TODAY--IN THOUGHTS
AND HOPES, IN PHRASES AND SACRED SIGNS THAT GO BACK
TO THE APOSTLES AND TO CHRIST--WHEN YOU SEE WHAT IS
ENTRUSTED TO YOU, WHEN YOU TRY TO COMPREHEND WHAT IS
REQUIRED OF YOU--YES, EVEN DEMANDED OF YOU--APOSTLES,
SHEPHERDS, TEACHERS, PROPHETS, SERVANTS, LEADERS, HEALERS,
RECONCILERS, CONFESSORS, BUILDERS, BURDEN-BEARERS,
LOST-SEEKERS, VICTIM-SHARERS--TO THE VERY LAST DROPS
OF YOUR BLOOD: HOW CAN YOU POSSIBLY TAKE IT IN?
THE CHURCH ENTRUSTS SO MUCH TO YOU; THE CHURCH ASKS
SO MUCH FROM YOU: GIVES YOU MORE THAN YOU CAN BEAR;

ASKS YOU MORE THAN YOU CAN GIVE.

BUT THE GOSPEL YOU JUST HEARD SURELY GIVES YOU COMFORT. CHRIST SAID, "IT WAS NOT YOU WHO CHOSE ME, IT WAS I WHO CHOSE YOU." [JOHN 15:16] YOU DIDN'T CHOOSE THE CHURCH, YOU DIDN'T CHOOSE US-- WE CHOSE YOU! --MOVED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD. THE SAME SPIRIT WHO TEACHES US TO HUNGER AND TO THIRST, THE SAME SPIRIT WHO WRINGS OUR HEARTS WITH THE PURGING KNOWLEDGE OF OUR SINS--THE SAME SPIRIT IN YOU AND IN US STRIKES THE ROCK OF OUR HUMAN LIVES TO OPEN UP NEW WELL-SPRINGS OF DIVINE MERCY AND THE ABUNDANCE OF LIFE-GIVING GRACE.

WE ARE NOT AFRAID OF YOU--MICHAEL, PETER, AUBREY, THOMAS, MIGUEL--NOR ARE WE AFRAID FOR YOU. WE LOOK AT YOU TODAY AND SEE YOUR HAPPINESS AND HOPE-- AND WE SEE YOU SHIVERING IN YOUR BOOTS, OR SHAKING IN YOUR SANDALS, AND WE SEE THE HUMILITY AND THE HUMOR OF GOD WHO HAS ALWAYS ENTRUSTED HIS WORD TO THE EARS AND HEARTS OF SINFUL HUMAN BEINGS. HE CAN MAKE IN YOU--AND HE WILL MAKE IN YOU AND WITH YOU, BY YOU AND FROM YOU--A MIGHTY PEOPLE. HE WHOSE ALMIGHTY SPIRIT IN LOWLY HUMOR SETS ALIVE THE VERY WORLD WITH GOD'S OWN LIFE IN A TINY FRACTION OF BREAD-- WITH EQUAL GOOD HUMOR AND HUMBLE LOVE WILL FILL YOUR WORDS, YOUR TOUCHES, TEARS AND LAUGHTER, YOUR CARES AND THOUGHTS WITH THE BLOOD AND WITH THE JOY OF CHRIST.

GOD IS NOT AFRAID TO MAKE YOU CHRIST FOR US--WHY SHOULD WE FEAR TO FIND HIM STARTLINGLY NEW, IN HUMBLE POWERFUL FORM-- IN YOU, MY DEAREST BROTHERS AND FRIENDS?

"I NO LONGER CALL YOU SLAVES BUT FRIENDS" JESUS SAYS TO HIS APOSTLES, AND HE SAYS TO YOU. THE CHURCH TOO--AND I--WELCOME YOU THIS DAY AS FRIENDS OF CHRIST. WE TAKE COMFORT AND COURAGE IN YOUR WORDS, AND HEAR CHRIST IN A NEW WAY IN THE WITNESS OF YOUR DEDICATION AND YOUR LIVES--MICHAEL, PETER, AUBREY, THOMAS, MIGUEL.

WHEN I READ THE LETTER THAT YOU SENT ME REQUESTING ORDINATION, MICHAEL--I WAS SO TOUCHED BY YOUR EAGERNESS TO SERVE GOD'S PEOPLE! "FREELY AND WITHOUT RESERVATION" YOU MAKE YOUR REQUEST--AND THOSE WORDS ALMOST JUMP OFF THE PAPER FOR JOY! "THE PRIESTHOOD REQUIRES A FIRM AND STEADFAST LOVE AND BELIEF IN THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST AND A PERSONAL OPENNESS TO THE GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. ABOVE ALL, THE PRIEST IS CALLED TO BE A MAN OF PRAYER AND REFLECTION." THE CHURCH REJOICES IN YOU, MICHAEL-- A MAN OF GOD FOR US TODAY.

AND YOU, PETER, HOW MUCH YOU LOVE THE CHURCH. YOU HAVE OBVIOUSLY STUDIED VERY HARD HOW YOU MIGHT BEST THINK WITH THE CHURCH AND LEARN FROM THE PEOPLE OF GOD. "MY VISION OF THE PRIESTHOOD (AND ME AS A PRIEST)," YOU WRITE, "CAN ONLY BE DISCUSSED IN

CONNECTION TO AND AS A PART OF THE COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS. CALLED BY GOD THROUGH THE COMMUNITY, I SEE MYSELF AS PRIEST TO BE A HERALD OF THE GOOD NEWS, A SERVANT OF THE COMMUNITY, A CELEBRANT OF THE SACRAMENTS, AND AS A LOYALIST TO THE ROMAN CATHOLIC TRADITION." IN YOUR LOYALTY TO THE CALL OF GOD, DEAR PETER, HOW YOU WILL BE LIKE THE ROCK AFTER WHOM YOU ARE NAMED. MAY YOUR FAITH BE MADE STRONG IN THE FAITH OF THE CHURCH. MAY OURS BE MADE STRONG IN YOURS.

AUBREY, YOU HAVE WALKED WITH GOD'S DEAREST CHILDREN--TEACHING IN WEST AFRICA, AND IN NURSING AND TENDING THE NEEDS OF THE INJURED, THE PARALYZED AND THE TROUBLED IN THIS COUNTRY. "IT WAS MY ADULT EXPERIENCE OF WORKING WITH PEOPLE IN AN ENABLING CAPACITY," YOU WRITE, " AND IN DISCOVERING THE LORD PRESENT IN THE ACTIVITY, THAT LED ME TO STUDY FOR THE PRIESTHOOD. OURS IS A MINISTERIAL CHURCH AND AS SUCH THE CHURCH IS THE AGENT OF THE LORD IN THE WORLD, CONCERNED TO DO HIS WORK AND TO MANIFEST HIS ACTIVITY TO THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD. THUS THE CHURCH REPRESENTS THE LORD AND CONTINUES TO BE WHAT JESUS WAS--THE PRESENCE OF GOD AMONG HIS PEOPLE." THESE WORDS YOU WROTE, AUBREY, SURELY SHOW THAT YOU HAVE CAPTURED THE SPIRIT OF ST. FRANCIS WHO DISCOVERED THE SWEETNESS AND LIFE OF CHRIST IN THE POOR AND DISABLED AND REJECTED

SICK --AMONG WHOM THE LORD LED HIM TO SERVE. YOU HAVE FOUND CHRIST--MORE AND MORE NOW MAY YOU GIVE HIM TO THE WORLD.

THOMAS, YOU BRING SO MUCH TO THE PRIESTHOOD IN YOUR HUMBLE WORDS: "AS A PRIEST I WILL CHERISH THE MOMENTS IN WHICH I WILL HEAR THE STORY OF THOSE I SERVE, IN WHICH I WILL HELP THEM DISCOVER A LOVING GOD. I LOOK FORWARD TO THE YEARS AHEAD, AWARE MORE THAN EVER OF MY NEED TO BE A MAN OF PRAYER AND TO SEEK THE LOVE AND SUPPORT OF MY FELLOW FRIARS AND MY FAMILY." YOU WRITE ALSO THAT YOU "HOPE TO CALL PEOPLE TO MINISTRY AND SERVICE IN THE CHURCH IN RESPONSE TO THE GIFT OF FAITH GIVEN TO US ALL IN BAPTISM." YOU RECOGNIZE, THOMAS, THAT YOU NEED PEOPLE, BECAUSE GOD HAS MADE US TO FIND HIM, TO FIND LIFE--HEALING, FORGIVENESS, WHOLENESS--IN PEOPLE, IN ONE ANOTHER. YOU ARE NOT ASHAMED TO ADMIT THAT YOU ARE INCOMPLETE, THAT YOU HAVE NEEDS. YOU NEED TO BE LOVED, TO RECEIVE THE LOVE AND SUPPORT OF YOUR FELLOW FRIARS AND FAMILY, THAT YOU NEED THE PRAYERS AND CARE OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD. MAY YOU FIND HIM IN THESE HUMBLE LONGINGS OF YOUR HEART, THOMAS-- AND MAY WE FIND HIM IN YOU.

MIGUEL--IN YOU AND IN YOUR WORDS TODAY WE CELEBRATE THE VERY WEDDING OF GOD. YOU TALK LIKE A BRIDEGROOM! "MY PEOPLE!" YOU PROCLAIM! "I CALL



MIGUEL- CONTIGO Y CON TUS PALABRAS HOY,
CELEBRAMOS LA BODA MISMA DE DIOS.

!HABLAS COMO UN NÓVIO! "PUEBLO MIO"/PROCLAMAS.

"LES LLAMO 'PUEBLO MIO' /PORQUE CREO QUE EL SEÑOR/
ME HA CONFIADO SU BIENESTAR ESPIRITUAL./

YO GOZO EN DIRIGIR EN ORACIÓN A SU PUEBLO,/Y
GOZO EN SERVIRLES A ELLOS./DESCUBRÍ A LA VEZ,/QUE EL PUEBLO
ME ENRIQUECÍA ESPIRITUALMENTE A MÍ./

POR ESO, QUISIERA LLEVARLES MÁS CERCA A DIOS/POR MEDIO
DE LOS SACRAMENTOS DE LA IGLESIA. QUISIERA SER/'PUENTE'/
ENTRE DIOS Y SU PUEBLO.

QUIERO SER SACERDOTE/QUE OBRE ACTIVAMENTE AL SERVICIO
DEL PUEBLO DE DIOS/e AL MISMO TIEMPO LÓGRE QUE LOS VALORES
DEL EVANGELIO/se VEAN EN MI VIDA COMO FRAILE Y SACERDOTE."

MIGUEL- NOSOTROS TAMBIÉN DESEAMOS QUE SEAS SACERDOTE-
NOS REUNIMOS EN EL MISMO COMPROMISO CON DIOS:

"TU PUEBLO"- MIGUEL, "NUESTRO PUEBLO" "EL MISMO PUEBLO DEL SEÑOR".

THEM 'MY PEOPLE' BECAUSE I FEEL THAT THE LORD HAS ENTRUSTED ME WITH THEIR SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING. I ENJOY LEADING PEOPLE IN PRAYER AND MINISTERING TO THEM. I DISCOVERED AT THE SAME TIME THAT I TOO WAS BEING MINISTERED TO BY THEM. THEREFORE I WANT TO BE ABLE TO BRING THEM CLOSER TO GOD THROUGH THE SACRAMENTS OF THE CHURCH. I WANT TO BE A 'BRIDGE' BETWEEN GOD AND HIS PEOPLE. I WANT TO BE A PRIEST FOR THE CHURCH TO WORK ACTIVELY AT THE SERVICE OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD AND AT THE SAME TIME REFLECTING ON MAKING THE GOSPEL MY WAY OF LIFE." MIGUEL--WE WANT YOU TO BE A PRIEST TOO--WE COME TOGETHER IN THE VERY BOND OF GOD: "YOUR PEOPLE"--MIGUEL. "HIS PEOPLE." "OUR PEOPLE."

HOW BLESSED WE ARE TODAY, MY PEOPLE. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOING TO DO AN ENTIRELY NEW THING IN OUR MIDST. THE WORDS OF THEIR LIVES--OF THESE FIVE BROTHERS OF OURS--ARE TO BE MADE ANEW, JUST AS REALLY AND WONDROUSLY AS THE BREAD AND WINE UPON THE ALTAR. CHRIST IS BORN AGAIN AS ONCE IN BETHLEHEM. CHRIST PRAYS WITH US TODAY AS ONCE IN THE GARDEN, BLESSES TODAY AS ONCE UPON THE CROSS.

IN THE NAME OF GOD AND HIS PEOPLE I THANK YOU MOMS AND DADS, GRANDPARENTS, BROTHERS AND SISTERS, AUNTS AND UNCLES AND COUSINS, TEACHERS, CONFRERES, AND FRIENDS--FOR ALL THAT YOU BRING TO THE ALTAR

THIS DAY. WITH PRAYER AND LOVE --IN YOUR NAME
I THANK GOD FOR ALL THAT HE PROMISES TO US AND
ALL HIS CHILDREN WHO WILL BE BLESSED BY THE LIVES
OF THESE FIVE HUMAN BEINGS WE SET ASIDE, CONSECRATE,
ANOINT AND CHOOSE TODAY. MAY THE LORD WHO HAS
BEGUN A GOOD WORK IN YOU BRING IT TO A HAPPY
PERFECTION.

WE RELY ON THE HELP OF THE LORD GOD AND
OUR SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST, AND WE CHOOSE
THESE MEN, OUR BROTHERS.....

WE CHOOSE YOU: MICHAEL, PETER, AUBREY, THOMAS,
MIGUEL.....

FOR PRIESTHOOD IN THE PRESBYTERAL ORDER.....
FOR THE GLORY OF GOD AND THE GOOD OF HIS PEOPLE!
PRAISE BE HIS HOLY NAME!