

YEAR OF THE PRIEST

Pope Benedict has declared an extraordinary Year of the Priest, beginning with the June 19, 2009, the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. We would like to offer the following prayer for our priests. Please keep them in your prayers throughout this year.

A Month of Prayer & Reflection Adoration Chapel June 19 to July 19

EVERYONE is invited to pray the following Emmaus Prayer for Priests this month as we share a spiritual opportunity to support our Priests.

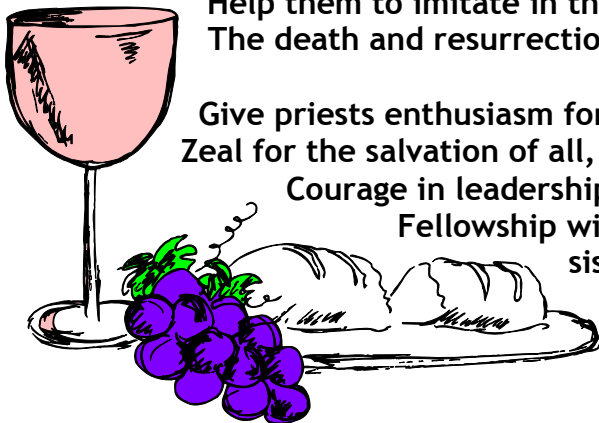
Lord Jesus, hear our prayer
For the spiritual renewal of priests.
We praise you for giving their ministry to the Church.
In these days renew them with the gifts of your Spirit.

You once opened the Scriptures
To the disciples on the road to Emmaus.
Now renew your ordained ministers
With the truth and power of your Word.

In the Eucharist you gave the Emmaus disciples
Renewed life and hope.
Nourish priests with your own Body and Blood.
Help them to imitate in their lives
The death and resurrection they celebrate at your altar.

Give priests enthusiasm for the Gospel,
Zeal for the salvation of all,
Courage in leadership, humility in service,
Fellowship with one another and with all their brothers and
sisters in You.

For You love them, Lord Jesus,
And we love and pray for them in Your name. Amen



POPE WILL OPEN YEAR FOR PRIESTS

Rome (Catholic Online) - According to the Vatican Information Service, Pope Benedict XVI will preside at Second Vespers to mark the opening of the Year for Priests in the Vatican Basilica on Friday June 19, 2009. This date marks the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and coincides with the 150th anniversary of the death of St. Jean Marie Vianney "Cure of Ars".

The Catholic News Agency, in a March 16th article, covered the Holy Father's announcement that the Church will celebrate a special year for priests beginning on June 19. The full content of the article follows:

In his address, the Pontiff emphasized the constant struggle for moral perfection that dwells "in every truly priestly heart." In support of this tendency toward spiritual perfection, the Holy Father announced that he has "decided to call a special 'Year for Priests' which will run from June 19, 2009 to June 19, 2010."

He noted that the year also marks the "150th anniversary of the death of the saintly 'Cure of Ars', Jean Marie Vianney, a true example of a pastor at the service of Christ's flock."

The Pope will inaugurate the Year on June 19 by presiding at Vespers in St. Peter's Basilica, where the relics of the 'Cure of Ars' will be brought for the occasion by Bishop Guy Bagnard of Belley-Ars, France.

During the course of the Year, Benedict XVI will proclaim St. Jean Marie Vianney as the patron saint of all the priests of the world. A "Directory for Confessors and Spiritual Directors" will also be published, as will a collection of texts by the Holy Father on essential aspects of the life and mission of priests in our time.

The year will close June 19, 2010, with Pope Benedict presiding at a "World Meeting of Priests" in St. Peter's Square.

Speaking to the Congregation for Clergy, the Holy Father also mentioned the ecclesial communal, hierarchical and doctrinal dimensions that are "absolutely indispensable for any authentic [priestly] mission," and which guarantee "spiritual effectiveness."

He explained that the mission is ecclesial "because no one announces or brings themselves, ... but brings Another, God Himself, to the world. God is the only wealth that, definitively, mankind wishes to find in a priest."

"The mission is 'communal,'" he continued, "because it takes place in a unity and communion which only at a secondary level possess important aspects of social visibility."

He added that the "'hierarchical' and 'doctrinal' dimensions emphasize the importance of ecclesiastical discipline (a term related to that of 'disciple') and of doctrinal (not just theological, initial and permanent) formation."

The Pope also stressed the importance of priestly formation which must maintain "communion with unbroken ecclesial Tradition, without pausing or being tempted by discontinuity. In this context," he continued, "it is important to encourage priests, especially the young generations, to a correct reading of the texts of Vatican Council II, interpreted in the light of all the Church's doctrinal inheritance."

In conclusion, the Holy Father warned of the "dilution" of priestly ministry. He explained that the without priests, "there would be no Eucharist, no mission" or the Church.

"It is necessary then, to ensure that 'new structures' or pastoral organizations are not planned for a time in which it will be possible to 'do without' ordained ministry, on the basis of an erroneous interpretation of the promotion of the laity, because this would lay the foundations for a further dilution in priestly ministry, and any supposed 'solutions' would, in fact, dramatically coincide with the real causes of the problems currently affecting the ministry."