

Homily – Priesthood Ordination

May 15, 2019

This is a day of great joy for the Church of San Antonio! For, in the presence of those who have nurtured and supported this candidate, I will ordain Duncan Amek to the priesthood of Jesus Christ. My brother, to you, and through you, the Lord will continue to fulfill his promise to be a Good Shepherd, one who knows his people and cares for them.

A candidate for the priesthood, no matter his age, can easily identify with Jeremiah's words: "Ah Lord God, I do not know how to speak. I am too young." I am not worthy. I am not ready yet. Give me more time. God's response is very reassuring: I know you well! "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you. . . I will be with you."

Pope Francis says that a priest must always remember God's call: "We are called by God and we are called to be with Jesus, united with him. It is precisely this 'life in Christ' that ensures our apostolate is effective, that our service is fruitful." So, my brother, remember that you have been called by God every day and hour of your priestly service! Deepen your understanding of your call by God through daily prayer!

The Letter to the Hebrews is both consoling and challenging. It is consoling to realize that we priests are taken from among the community, that we are “beset by weakness” and from this awareness we are able to deal patiently with others. It is comforting to remember that we are fully human, no more and no less than anyone else. It is challenging to acknowledge this in all humility.

This morning when I lay my hands upon you and anoint you with sacred chrism, we will call down the Holy Spirit upon you – not to honor or reward you with an exalted position – but to enable you to serve others faithfully after the model of the Good Shepherd.

At the Last Supper Jesus prays that his heavenly Father will consecrate his disciples “in the truth. Your words are truth. As you sent me into the world, so I send them into the world.” We live in a time of chaos and polarization, of “fake news” and distorted information for partisan purposes. Duncan, as a priest, as a missionary disciple, you are to lead your people in faithfully and boldly proclaiming the truth of the gospel. Bring the Light of Christ into the darkness and shadows of our world. The Holy Spirit will empower you to do this. Our Lady, the Mother of the Church, will be with you, showing you the way to faithful discipleship as a priest!