



The Holy See

EPISCOPAL ORDINATION ON THE SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

HOMILY OF JOHN PAUL II

Monday, 6 January 2003

1. *"Rise up in splendour" (Is 60,1).*

Notice how the prophet Isaiah speaks to the city of Jerusalem. He invites her to let herself be enlightened by her Lord, the infinite light that makes his glory shine over Israel. The people of God are called to become light themselves in order to direct the way of the nations, over whom hang "darkness" and "thick clouds" (Is 60,2).

The prophetic word resounds with full meaning on this solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord. The Magi, who come from the East to Jerusalem, are guided by a heavenly body (cf. Mt 2,1-2) and represent *the first fruits of the peoples attracted by the light of Christ*. They recognize in Jesus the Messiah, and they show before hand that now is the fulfilment of the "mystery" of which St Paul speaks in the second reading: *"that the Gentiles are called in Christ Jesus ... to be co-heirs of the promise through the preaching of the Gospel"* (Eph 3,6).

2. Beloved Brothers chosen for the Episcopate, today you become *fully empowered ministers of this mystery* by receiving the sacrament that makes you successors of the Apostles.

Your names and your faces speak of the universal Church: in the language of the Fathers, the *Catholica*. Indeed, you come from many nations and continents; and you are newly appointed for many countries.

Faith in Christ, the light of the world, has guided your steps from your youth to your offering of yourselves in priestly ordination. To the Lord you did not give gold, incense and myrrh, but your

lives. Now Christ asks you to renew that self-offering, so that you may exercise in the Church the episcopal ministry. As he did once with the Twelve, he invites each of you to participate fully in his life and mission (cf. Mk 3,13-15).

You receive the *fullness of the gift*, at the same time, you are asked to give the *fullness of dedication*.

3. I greet you with affection and I embrace each of you spiritually.

I greet you, dear Archbishop Paul Tschang In-Nam, Archbishop Celestino Migliore, Archbishop Pierre Nguyễn Van Tot, Archbishop Pedro López Quintana, who will be *my representatives* in countries of Asia and Africa and at the UN. I thank you for the valuable service you have given till now to the Holy See, and I pray that your pastoral ministry may contribute to make the light of Christ shine among the peoples. In respect for their institutions and cultures, may you invite the nations to whom you are being sent, to be open to the Gospel. Only Christ can guarantee a profound renewal of consciences and of peoples.

I greet you, dear Archbishop Angelo Amato and Bishop Brian Farrell, to whom *in the Roman Curia* I have entrusted the offices of the Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and of the Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. Fidelity to the Catholic Tradition and dedication to the ecumenical dialogue: on this track your service will always proceed securely.

I greet you, dear Bishop Calogero La Piana of Mazara del Vallo, Italy; Bishop René-Marie Ehuzu of Abimey, Benin; Bishop Ján Babjak of the Eparchy of Presov, Slovakia; Bishop Andraos Abouna, Auxiliary of the Patriarchate of Babylon of the Chaldeans, Iraq; Bishop Milan Sasik, Apostolic Administrator "*ad nutum Sanctae Sedis*" of the Eparchy of Mukacheve, Ukraine; Bishop Giuseppe Nazzaro, Apostolic Vicar of Alep of the Latins, Syria.

May the beloved ecclesial communities who will receive you, whom I greet with affection, be able to find in you diligent and generous Pastors. Following the example and with the help of the Good Shepherd, may you always lead believers to the pastures of eternal life.

4. "*By this they will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another*" (Jn 13,35).

Dear and venerable Pastors, the divine Master asks you to live and give witness to his love. In fact, the proclamation of the saving love of God is the synthesis of the mission that today, on the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, the Church entrusts to you.

Make the beauty of the Gospel, the compendium of divine charity, *shine forth* in the sight of the flock entrusted to you. To the entire Christian people, offer *a shining witness of holiness*. Always

be an epiphany of Christ and of his merciful love, and let nothing prevent you from bringing this mission to fulfilment.

May the *Blessed Virgin Mary, teacher of perfect conformity to her divine Son*, sustain and protect you in the various duties you are called to fulfill.

As the Apostle urges us, be concerned to reflect "*the glory of the Lord as in a mirror*" and "you will be transformed *into his image, from glory to glory*" (cf. II Cor 3,18). May this take place in each of you for the glory of God and the good of souls. Amen.

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