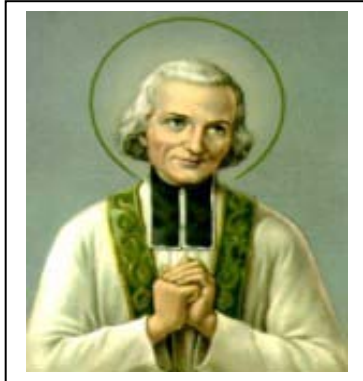


YEAR OF THE PRIESTHOOD

Introduction:



Dear Parents:

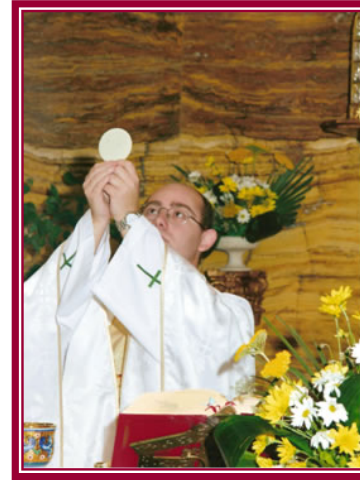
We thank God for allowing us to begin a new school year. We also thank you for receiving us in your homes through the Family Bulletin so that under the guidance of the Master we may join in the formation of the new generations according to God's plan.

Pope Benedict XVI has declared the "Year of the Priesthood" from June 19, 2009 through, June 19, 2010 on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of death of St. John Vianney. The theme for the Year of the Priesthood is Christ's fidelity and priestly fidelity.

WHY MUST WE CELEBRATE A YEAR OF THE PRIESTHOOD

The Pope tells us that the Year of the Priesthood will emphasize the religious and supernatural dimension of priesthood, before the influence and pressure of our present culture distort the image of the presbyter and see him simply as a person dedicated to the service of others and not as the man of God. "Because he belongs to Christ, the priest is radically at the service of people and promotes their growth: is minister of their salvation, of their happiness, of their authentic liberation" (Pope Benedict XVI)

Therefore, the objective of this "Year of the Priesthood" is above all to help the priests and to open the hearts of all of the people of God: Christian families, the suffering, and the youth who are quick to respond to great ideals lived with fidelity, to rediscover and invigorate our conscience with the extraordinary and indispensable gift of Grace that this ministry represents for those who have received it, for the Church and for the world; that without the true presence of Christ would be lost.



Our present society does not appreciate the spiritual dimension of the priest and is looking for ways by which to emphasize the scandals, the weakness of some members of the clergy, without recognizing the exemplary life and generous service of so many priests, the quiet majority, who are faithful to their ministry.

We are invited in a special way during this year to pray for the increase of vocations to the priesthood and for holy priests. Let us also pray that we all may take advantage of this time to get to know who a priest is and what we must expect of him.

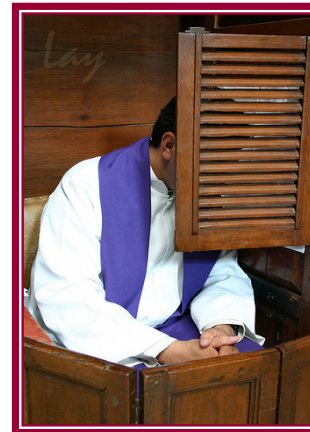
We will reflect on an article written by Huga Wast, a novelist and politician from Argentina, (1883-1963), who in 1943 became Minister of Justice and Public Education. He accepted these positions under the condition that religious education should be part of every school curriculum



Message

WHEN WE REALIZE (Hugo Wast.)

When we realize that the Blessed Virgin cannot do that which a priest can. When we realize that neither the angels nor the archangels nor principalities, who won over Lucifer, can do that which a priest can. When we remember that Our Lord Jesus Christ at the Last Supper performed a miracle greater than the creation of the Universe with all its splendor when He transformed the bread and wine into His Body and Blood to feed the world and that this great miracle in front of which angels and men kneel, can be repeated every day by the priest.

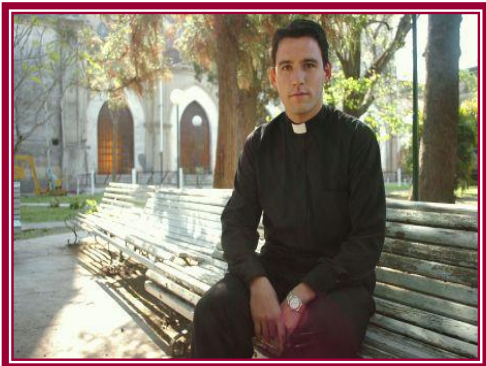


When we remember the other miracle that only a priest can perform: forgive or retain sins in the humble confessional and that God committed by His own Word forgives or retains the sin at that very instance.

When we realize that the world would die of the worst hunger if that bread and wine would be missing. When we think that this could happen because of lack of priestly vocations; that if this would occur the heavens would be moved and the earth would explode as if the hand of God had failed to support it. People yelling and mourning in anguish and starvation would beg for that bread and no one would be there to give it to them; they would ask for an absolution of their sins and there would be no one to absolve them of their sins and they would die with their eyes open in terror.

When we realize that a priest is missed more than a king, a military person, a banker, a doctor, a teacher, because not one of them can replace him. When we remember that when a priest celebrates on the altar he acquires an infinite dignity greater than kings; that he is not merely a symbol, not even an ambassador of Christ; but, Christ himself who is there repeating the greatest miracle of God.

When we think about all of these things we understand the immense need that we have of promoting vocations to the priesthood. We can understand the zeal with which, in times past, families looked forward to having one of their children enter the priesthood. We can understand the immense respect that people had toward the priests. We can understand that the worst crime that someone can commit is to hinder or discourage a vocation to the priesthood.



We understand that if a father or a mother places stumbling blocks on the path of their son when they have discovered that they have a vocation to the priesthood; it is as if they are renouncing to an incomparable title of nobility. We understand that the seminary and the novitiate is more than a church, a school and a hospital. We understand that when we give financial support to build or maintain a seminary or a novitiate we are helping to multiply the birth of our Redeemer. We understand that when we help pay the tuition of a young seminarian or novice we are opening the road for a man to reach the altar where for a half hour every day he will be more than all dignitaries and all the saints in heaven, since he will be Christ himself sacrificing his Body and Blood to feed the world.

Discuss:

- ❖ Do you know your parish priests? Do you thank God for them? Do you support them with your prayers? Do you accompany them in their path of fidelity? Do you collaborate with them in pastoral work?
- ❖ Do you pray that a member of your family may receive the calling to the priesthood?
- ❖ How will you commit to celebrate the Year of the Priesthood as a family?

Bibliography:

Year of the Priesthood 2009 – 2010 www.vatican.va
 Reflection on the importance and need of priests <http://es.catholic.net/vocations>
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