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# Pope tells priests, show mercy; tells faithful, pester your priests

Carol Glatz Catholic News Service | May. 12, 2014 The Francis Chronicles
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Always be merciful, just like Jesus, who came to forgive, not condemn, Pope Francis told new priests.

"Always have in front of your eyes the example of the Good Shepherd, who didn't come to be served, but to serve and to look for and save those who were lost," he said in his homily Sunday, the World Day of Prayer for Vocations.

The pope's remarks came during an ordination Mass in St. Peter's Basilica, where the pope ordained 13 new priests.

Most of the new priests -- six Italians, four Latin Americans and one Korean -- will serve in the diocese of Rome. A 36-year-old new priest from Vietnam will serve the diocese of Vinh in his home country and a new priest from Pakistan is part of the Order of Discalced Augustinians.

Pope Francis reminded the men that Jesus called them to continue his mission as teacher, priest and shepherd and to serve the church and the people of God.

He urged them to read, reflect on and teach the word of God and to be a living example of what they preach.

Nourish God's people with his word and doctrine, "which isn't yours. You do not own the doctrine (of the faith). It is the doctrine of the Lord and you must be faithful to the Lord's doctrine," the pope said.

In their new role of administering the sacraments, including reconciliation, he asked them to "never tire of being merciful! Please! Have the same ability to forgive that the Lord has, who didn't come to condemn, but to forgive! Have lots of mercy!"

He said it pains him terribly "when I see people who don't go to confession anymore because they had been clobbered, yelled at. They felt that the doors of the church had been closed in their face. Please, don't do this."

He also encouraged the priests to show mercy.

A good priest "comes in through the door and the doors of mercy are the wounds of the Lord. If you do not enter into your ministry through the Lord's wounds, you will not be good pastors," he said.

Later in the day, the pope told those gathered in St. Peter's Square for the *Regina Coeli* to pray that God "help us pastors always be faithful" to God and to guide his children with wisdom and love.

With Christ as their model, priests must lead their people by showing them the way ahead, they must walk with their flock by showing mercy and friendship, and walk behind their people to help those who are struggling to keep up or who have lost their way, he said.

But often the faithful need to poke and prod their priest to remind him to give them God's guidance and support, he added.

"Pester your priests," he said, much like a baby calf pesters its mother for milk and nourishment.

Pope Francis highlighted a metaphor used by St. Caesarius of Arles of the sixth century in which priests graze the fields of Scriptures, nourishing themselves on the rich teachings in order to -- in turn -- provide spiritual nourishment for their children.

The saint explained how the people of God have to fuss and nudge their priest to give them the "milk" of the Word of God, much like a calf nudges and "pushes its nose against the cow's udder to get the milk flowing. It's a beautiful image!" the pope said.

"This saint says that's how you must be with priests: always knocking on their door, on their heart so that they give you the milk of doctrine, the milk of grace and the milk of guidance."

"Bother them, all of us priests," he said, like the calf "pesters the mother to give it something to eat."

The pope also asked people gathered in the square to pray for vocations.

"Let us pray so that, even today, lots of young people hear the Lord's voice, which always risks being drowned out by so many other voices."

He also wished the world's mothers a happy Mother's Day. He led people in praying the "Hail Mary," asking that all mothers be entrusted to Mary.

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