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Paternaly Guide God's People in the Way of Salvation

- "Do you resolve to guide the holy people of God in the way of salvation as devoted fathers and sustain them with the help of your fellow ministers, the Priests and Deacons?"
 - Our faith is fundamentally dynamic. Jesus never says to us, "Stay right where you are," but rather, "Come, follow me!" "Come away with me to a deserted place and rest," "Come all you who labor and are burdened," "Come after me and I will make you fishers of men," and "Go!" "Go to the lost sheep of the House of Israel," "Go home to your family and tell them all that the Lord in his mercy has done for you!" "Go to the whole world proclaiming the Gospel to every creature." We make straight the paths for Christ to come but then we go out to meet the Bridegroom as he advances. So many of Jesus' miracles involve this journey. He comes in the vicinity of the blind man but allows the blind man to get up and make the journey to him. He approaches a town where he intends to spend many hours healing, but he goes up the mountain and forces, in a sense, people to journey there or carry people on stretchers. The point is that our faith is a journey, a pilgrimage, an exodus, from a spiritual Egypt to the promised land, from a spiritual Jericho to Mt. Zion, from sin to the freedom of the children of God, from death to life. And that pilgrimage needs a guide, a guide who can rouse them to leave their comfort zones and make the pilgrimage, a guide who knows the destination to where they're traveling, a guide who knows how to lead them from A to B to Q to Z and beyond.
 - I've had the joy of leading tens of thousands of people on pilgrimage. When I was in Rome, I was a guide to the Vatican Scavi for five years, taking in total about 10,000 through a pagan necropolis to get to and pray at St. Peter's tomb and before his remains. I led several hundred tours of St. Peter's Basilica, close to 100 of each of the other Patriarchal Basilicas, San Clemente, Santa Croce in Gerusalemme and dozens of other of Rome's most beautiful Churches as part of a 125 part Vatican Radio Series. As a priest I've led several parish pilgrimages to Rome, but also to the Holy Land, to Fatima, Lourdes, Santiago de Compostela, the great shrines of Spain, Italy, France and more. I've led several others of American journalists and of American businessmen and women. I've always considered this work an encapsulation of the priesthood, because the Christian life is meant to be a pilgrimage. Pilgrims to Rome in the Middle Ages were coming not principally *ad limina apostolorum*, although that was obviously important, but the main point of the pilgrimage was to see the face of Christ, Veronica's veil, kept in one of the reliquaries of the Basilica and then regularly shown, today shown only on the fifth Sunday of Lent. Similarly earthly life is meant to be a pilgrimage to see the face of Christ. And our task is to shepherd people along what Isaiah calls that holy highway. With many parishioners, I was able to accomplish as much on a 10-12 day pilgrimage as I was in several years of pastoral sweat and tears. When they were sitting in their pew, often they'd be responding to faith in a routine way. Getting them out of that pew, journeying with their fellow Catholics, getting to know their shepherd up close, sharing meals, sharing daily Mass, learning about the faith, seeing the great monuments built by the faith of Catholics in previous generations, it was life-changing. The dynamic aspect of our faith, the rediscovery that they were heirs and heiresses to such extraordinary treasures, walking in the footsteps of Jesus or of his saints, was something that would lead many of them to say things like "it was like a retreat" and even that it was unexpectedly the highlight of their life.
 - I believe the practice of the faith, especially in the United States, needs to recover a little bit of the sense of excitement that comes along a journey of faith. We're serving many people whom we struggle to get to move from the last pew a few pews closer to the altar, who sometimes refuse to go to another Church if their parish Church needs sadly to close even though Jesus Christ awaits them in the new location, who are reluctant to the point of breaking out into cold sweats if we ask them to

join us on the streets for a Corpus Christi or Marian procession. We struggle to get them to make the crossing to the other side of the road to care for those left in a ditch. We struggle to get them from the marketplace to go work in the vineyards. And we obviously struggle to get them to jump overboard in faith onto the waves and walk toward Christ approaching on the water. As my friend Matthew Kelly has realized in his work trying to ignite lukewarm Catholics, it's harder to get people to go from no prayer to one solid minute of prayer, than to go from 1 to 5 or from 5 to 15. We have to overcome the spiritual inertia our tradition calls *acedia*. And that's my helping Catholics more and more become an *ecclesiam peregrinantem in terra*.

- This resolution is a beautiful one about how bishops commit themselves to being a pilgrimage leader, assisted by their brothers priests and brother deacons. It involves three parts:
 - The first is the pledge to guide God's people in the way of salvation
 - The second is to do so as devoted fathers
 - And the third is to sustain them on this pilgrimage with the help of their priests and deacons. I'd add that if they are going to sustain them on that pilgrimage to salvation through priests and deacons that they are going to need to help their brother clerics guide that same people as "devoted fathers" as well.
- And so what I'd like to do in this meditation is focus first a little bit on the pilgrimage in the way of salvation and then spend most of our time on this called to devoted fatherhood, both living as loving spiritual dads and forming priests and deacons to be devoted spiritual dads as well.
- The Way of Salvation
 - I've always loved the image God gave us through Isaiah that we ponder the second Monday of Advent. "A highway will be there, called the holy way; No one unclean may pass over it, nor fools go astray on it. ... It is for those with a journey to make, and on it the redeemed will walk." On Saturday of the first week, Isaiah prophesies the Messiah who will feed us, quench our thirst and teach us will speak to us from behind and say, "This is the path. Walk in it!" That path is Christ himself, who said, "I am the Way!" Our task is not only to point people to Christ and his holy way, the way of the redeemed, the way of those who know they have a journey to make, but to accompany them and lead them along that path. It's a path of salvation, a path not of mediocrity but of holiness, happiness, and heaven.
 - Teaching practices of holiness. JP II in the Pillars in NMI. A plan of life.
 - Many people do not believe they have a journey to make, that their salvation is assured, that unless they're serial killers, public smokers or those who gulp soft drinks larger than 16 ounces in New York City, they're already firmly fixed on the path that leads to their eventual apotheosis. And their defective eschatology is a real risk to their salvation.
 - Jesus once was asked how many would be saved. He didn't respond by giving a number or even a relative percentage, because He hadn't come to die on the cross to satisfy our curiosities. He replied by answering not how many would be saved but how to be saved: "Strive to enter through the narrow door, for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and not be able" (Lk 13:24).
 - The word translated as "strive" is the Greek word to "agonize." To get to Heaven, in other words, we need to agonize, like Jesus did in the Garden of Gethsemane, to conform our will to the Father's. We need to work harder than an undrafted free agent gives everything he's got in an NFL training camp to make the cut. The width of the narrow door to Heaven is the span of a needle's eye, the girth of the cross, something that is anything but easy to pass through.
 - Jesus told us that many will seek to enter through the narrow door but not make it. They will be left outside the door, pleading, "We ate and drank in Your presence and You taught in our streets," and remembering, "Did we not prophesy in Your name, and cast out demons in Your name, and do many miracles in Your name." Jesus says that God will then reply, "I never knew you" (Lk 13:25-27; Mt 7:21-23).
 - Jesus is emphasizing that it's not enough to have heard Him speak. It's not sufficient to have eaten and drunk with Him, even the Holy Eucharist. It's not adequate to proclaim the Gospel in His name, do exorcisms or even work miracles. After all, Judas Iscariot did all of these things, but he never really knew Who Jesus was. We need to enter into intimate friendship and communion with Him. We need to follow Him not just on the outside, but on the inside. We need to become His true

friend.

- Jesus never answered the question of how many would be saved, but He did give us a snapshot of how many are heading in the direction of Heaven and how many on the path to hell. After stressing the need to enter through the narrow door, He added, “For the door is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction and those who enter by it are many. And the door is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few” (Mt 7:13-14).
- This is not necessarily a picture of the way everything ends up — because the whole mission of the Church is to try to rescue people from the broad, easy, congested “highway to hell” and lead them to the narrow, uphill, way of the cross that leads to life — but it is a striking image, given to us by Jesus Himself, about the way the vast majority of people are trending.
- A quick glance at the practice of the Beatitudes, the Sacraments, and the Ten Commandments shows us why Jesus’ point is as valid today as two millennia ago. The vast majority, even of Catholics, aren’t really living the Beatitudes, aren’t coming to Confession frequently, Mass each Lord’s Day not to mention Holy Day, baptizing their children *quam primum*, marrying validly in the Church, receiving the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, etc. And many regard the Ten Commandments as ten suggestions or at least as a test they pass if they get 7 out of 10 right. When we consider these relative trends and note how many times Jesus in the Gospel preached about the judgment and about hell, does it make any sense at all that many presume that the final exam of life is easy and almost everyone goes to Heaven?
- Theoretically, of course, we can fathom that Judas, Hitler, Osama Bin Laden, sadists, and all the people who don’t like us might end up in hell, if there is a hell; but we can’t envisage ourselves, any of those we care about, or a sizable chunk of ordinary people ever ending up in Gehenna. How could a God Who is full of compassion, slow to anger, and rich in kindness ever set up an eternal, infernal dungeon in which He mercilessly punishes people for disobedience? How could God Who is love ever establish an everlasting Abu Ghraib for anyone, not to mention His beloved children?
- And if it’s the case that only those with post-doctoral degrees in Satanic wickedness are candidates for the eternal hall of shame, then, at a practical level, we can all just calm down, because very little now matters to our or others’ eternal destiny. It doesn’t matter if we spread the faith, because everyone gets to Heaven whether or not they know Jesus Christ. The Sacraments don’t matter. The Word of God doesn’t matter. It doesn’t matter if we pray or play, if we keep or break promises, if we steal or sacrifice, if we come to Mass or sleep in, if we’re faithful to our spouse or cheat, if we provide for or neglect our family, if we forgive or settle scores, if we love or abuse the poor, or if we welcome or abort the littlest of Jesus’ brethren. None of this matters — or at least none of it matters much. Since almost everyone in the class is going to make the eternal honor roll no matter what they do, while we may still admire those who study hard, the really wise ones are those who eat, drink and be merry and still get their easy A.
- But this way of believing and behaving is not Christian. Contrary to the idea that the final judgment is a cake walk and that everyone is with Led Zeppelin on the “Stairway to Heaven,” Jesus reminds us that “many” are on the wide, easy road leading to destruction and relatively “few” are entering through the narrow door leading to life (Mt 7:13-14). Jesus came from Heaven to show us the way to Heaven and indicated quite emphatically that not all roads lead there. He’s enlisted us in his service to guide people along Christ’s way and wants us to enlist others in that same life-giving path. To get to Heaven, we need to follow Him. If we tragically refuse to follow Him on that path, that choice has consequences.
- Just as much as Jesus discoursed on the beauty of Heaven, he spoke about the reality of hell. He compared hell to a blazing furnace, an unquenchable fire, a worm that doesn’t die. We can make choices, He said, that cause us to lose body and soul in hell, that exclude us from the banquet of the Kingdom, that lead God to say to us, “I never knew you.” Those who end up in this state, Jesus said, may be shocked because they had dined with Him, heard His sermons, even worked miracles in His name, but they had never really developed an intimate communion of life with Him. Those to whom Jesus will say, “Depart from Me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels,” will be startled to recognize that every time they neglected to nourish, dress, welcome and care for others — every time they failed to love their neighbor — they were failing to love Jesus

Himself in disguise. And those choices matter.

- In talking about hell, Jesus was not an ancient Stephen King entertaining the multitudes with fictional horror stories. He was communicating that hell is a real possibility of human freedom. Hell is not part of the Gospel Jesus proclaimed — hell is not “Good News” — but it is a reality for those who freely decide not to believe and live the Gospel.
- But the question remains: How is hell consistent with Divine love? If God calls us to forgive 70 times seven times, doesn’t hell mean that there’s a limit to His mercy?
- Hell was not part of God’s original plans, for everything He created was good. He formed us in His image and likeness in order to share His life and love, but He took a tremendous risk in creating us free: He made it possible for us to misuse our freedom against Him, others, and ourselves. Sin, suffering, death and hell are all the creation not of God but of those who refuse Him, the consequences of a disordered self-love so strong that it excludes the love of God.
- Jesus said that He had come into the world not to condemn the world but to save it, but He added, “The one who rejects Me and does not receive My word has a judge, and on the last day the Word that I have spoken will serve as judge” (Jn 12:47). Those who reject Jesus’ words of eternal life, who prefer to walk in the darkness instead of the light, become their own judges by the way they respond to the truth God has revealed. “There are only two kinds of people in the end,” C.S. Lewis once famously wrote. “Those who say to God, ‘Thy will be done,’ and those to whom God says, in the end, ‘Thy will be done.’ All that are in hell choose it.”
- Hell exists not despite God’s love but precisely because of it, in order to honor the desires of those who don’t want to live in loving communion with Him and others. It is the state, as the “Catechism” calls it, of “definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed.” It is the tragic possibility of human freedom for those who, in voluntarily choosing sin, separate themselves from God and others.
- When we ponder all God has done to make salvation possible, including Jesus’ brutal crucifixion to pay the full price for our sins, our response should not be to take Heaven for granted, but to say, with emotion, “So much mercy, so much love, and still some people choose against God!”
- Jesus on the cross paid the price not so that we could sin as much as we want and presumptuously still think we’ll get to Heaven, but so that we, moved by the horror of sin and by the immensity of His love, might choose to live in His light, lovingly unite our whole lives with Him, follow Him home to Heaven, and help others to join us on the narrow path to His eternal right side.
- It’s the choice between life and death, light and darkness, Heaven and hell. Jesus did everything necessary to enable us to choose well. But we have to choose Him lovingly in return, in each moral decision.
- And to be a pilgrimage leader we have to help people realize the stakes and to realize them in a way that’s not fundamentally “scaring the Hell out of them,” but as a devoted Father who in a manly way seeks to protect them from harm when they can’t do so on their own and to form them to recognize the harm and in a mature way avoid it, but walking on the safe path of the redeemed.
- Devoted Fathers
 - The Church calls Bishops to be loving spiritual dads.
 - Tomasz Grysa’s comment
 - Apostolorum Successores says:
 - “The Bishop manifests through his life and his episcopal ministry the fatherhood of God” (AS 1)
 - “He should behave like a father towards everyone, especially towards those of lowly condition” (AS 45)
 - “Human and affective maturity is required of the Bishop if, like a good father, he is to exercise his episcopal authority as an authentic service to the unity and right ordering of the family of God’s children” (AS 50)
 - “The Bishop is father of the priestly family and through him the Lord Jesus Christ is present among believers. For this reason, just as Jesus manifested his love for the Apostles, so too the Bishop knows that it is his duty to show particular *love and*

solicitude for priests and candidates for the sacred ministry” (AS 75)

- “In exercising his ministry, the Bishop relates to his priests not merely as a ruler towards his subjects, but rather as a father and a friend. He should devote himself wholeheartedly to creating a climate of affection and trust such that his priests may respond with a convinced, pleasing and firm obedience (AS 76)
- “One area which requires the keen attention of the Bishop and his ever increasing fatherly solicitude is the pastoral care of youth, in particular, young students. (AS 158)
- St. John Paul II in *Pastores Gregis* adds:
 - Bishops are called to be “pastors and true fathers” (PG 5)
 - “Bishops are, after God, their fathers and mothers” (PG 7)
 - “The Bishop becomes a "father" precisely because he is fully a "son" of the Church” (10)
 - “There is a **particularly apt Biblical image** to describe the figure of the Bishop as the friend of God and the pastor and guide of his people. It is the figure of **Moses**. Looking to him, the Bishop can find inspiration for his life and activity as a pastor, for Moses was chosen and sent by the Lord, courageous in leading his people toward the Promised Land, a faithful interpreter of the word and law of the living God, a mediator of the Covenant, ardent and confident in his prayer on behalf of his people. Like Moses, who after his dialogue with the Lord on the holy mountain returned among his people with his face radiant (cf. Ex 34:29-30), so the Bishop will be able to show his brothers and sisters that he is their father, brother and friend only if he has entered the dark yet luminous cloud of the mystery of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.” (12)
 - “Bishop needs to remain particularly close to his flock and above all to his priests, showing a father's concern for their ascetic and spiritual difficulties, and providing them with appropriate support to encourage them in fidelity to their vocation and to the requirements of an exemplary life in the exercise of the ministry. (21)
 - “The Bishop's work of evangelization, aimed at leading men and women to faith or to strengthening the faith within them, is an outstanding manifestation of his spiritual fatherhood. He can thus repeat with Paul: "Though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the Gospel" (1 Cor 4:15). Precisely because of this constant process of begetting new life in the Spirit, the episcopal ministry appears in the world as a sign of hope for every individual and people.” (26)
 - “Bishops, in the exercise of their ministry as fathers and shepherds in the midst of their faithful, must act as "those who serve", keeping always before their eyes the example of the Good Shepherd who came not to be served but to serve and to give his life for the sheep” (42).
 - “The Bishop will always strive to relate to his priests as a father and brother who loves them, listens to them, welcomes them, corrects them, supports them, seeks their cooperation and, as much as possible, is concerned for their human, spiritual, ministerial and financial well-being. The Bishop's special affection for his priests is demonstrated by his accompanying them as a father and brother in the fundamental stages of their ministerial life, starting with their first steps in the pastoral ministry.” (47).
 - “This compassion is always linked to the responsibility which the Bishop has accepted before God and the Church. It is in this way that he fulfils the promises and carries out the commitments made on the day of his episcopal ordination, when he freely assented to the Church's charge to care for the holy People of God as a devoted father and to guide them in the way of salvation; to be always welcoming

and merciful, in the name of the Lord, to the poor, the sick and all those in need of comfort and help; and, like a good shepherd, to go in search of the sheep who stray, in order to bring them back to the fold of Christ. (55)

- “the Bishop is the defender and the father of the poor, concerned for justice and human rights, and one who brings hope.”
- Crisis of Fatherhood
 - In a March 15, 2000 speech at the Cathedral of Palermo, Sicily, then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger said, “The crisis of fatherhood we are living today is an element, perhaps the most important, threatening man in his humanity.” He went on to say that that crisis, a true “dissolution of fatherhood,” comes from reducing fatherhood to a merely biological phenomenon — as an act of generation, sometimes even carried out in a laboratory — without its human and spiritual dimensions. That reduction not only leads to the “dissolution of what it means to be a son or a daughter,” but, on a spiritual plane, impedes our relationship to relate to God as he is and revealed himself. God, Cardinal Ratzinger said, “willed to manifest and describe himself as Father.” Human fatherhood provides us an analogy to understand the fatherhood of God, but “when human fatherhood has dissolved, all statements about God the Father are empty.” The crisis of fatherhood, therefore, leaves the human person lost, confused about who God is, confused about who he is, confused about where he has come from and where he is going. That’s why Cardinal Ratzinger says the crisis of paternity is perhaps the most important element threatening man.
 - It’s obvious that if our culture no longer has an adequate understanding of human fatherhood and, consequently, no longer knows what it means to call and relate to God as Father, then it is going to be very hard indeed to relate to the bishop or priest as a Father. Moreover, if the dissolution of Fatherhood has left many young men growing up without a father in the home, it will lead to other issues in terms of their spiritual paternity.
 - Sometimes clerical models can recapitulate Blankenhorn’s defective models in Fatherless America:
 - **The Old Father** — A controlling, hollering, belt-yielding authoritarian.
 - **Unnecessary Father** — Some look at the priest as superfluous because they minimally look at the sacraments as superfluous.
 - **New Father** — The new father is the emasculated parent, more a mother than a father. The new priestly father is on the premises but he arranges the flowers, he listens, he affirms, but often does not challenge the people and lead them. He sees a conflict between welcoming everyone and calling them to conversion, between his priestly life and priestly mission.
 - **Deadbeat dad** — There aren’t many of these in the priesthood, thanks be to God, but we do come across those who just don’t fulfill their responsibilities in a minimal way, keeping up the place, following through on promises to the people, doing the necessary paperwork, returning phone calls, etc.
 - **Visiting Father** — We see this in two ways. One is essentially through the priest who’s never around, who’s on one trip or another, or on a day off, or one who has office hours but you can’t reach him. It can also occur to a priest with multiple assignments, when he’s treated as a part-time dad, part-time stranger.
 - **Sperm father** — In many ways, this happens not because of the choices priests make to give life and disappear, but because many of those who receive from the priest the gift of God’s life decide not to continue any relationship. You won’t see them again after the baptism, or first communion, or confirmation, or marriage, or funeral for a dear family member, etc. It’s a reality that’s present in our culture that priests do experience, unwillingly.
 - **Step-father** — This is a dad who’s there, committed to the Church in general, but not really committed to his parishioners. He’s perhaps looking for his next assignment. He treat the “kids” out of duty, not love.
 - **Nearby guy** — This is a priest with no real bond, but who’s there just to fill a gap. This describes some of the circuit riders or many of the retired priests who just come in for a Mass, but form no particular bond with the parishioners.
 - **Good Family Man** — who provides, protects, nurtures, sponsors.

- What Jesus reveals about God the Father — Let’s look to see what Jesus revealed about the Father, because Jesus is the image of the Father and whoever has seen him as seen the Father (Jn 14:9). Jesus reveals to us the following qualities about God the Father that spiritual fathers are called to emulate and share:
- The Father takes delight in his children.
 - “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased,” God the Father thunders at Jesus’ baptism (Mt 3:17).
 - Has to know them!
- The Father loves unconditionally
 - Jesus says he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. (Mt 5:45).
- The Father cares about every one, 100 out of 100.
 - Matt. 18:14 So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.
- The Father is generous
 - Mt 6:26: Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?
 - § Matt. 7:11 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!
- The Father is observant
 - He sees what is done in secret and rewards (Mt 6:4).
 - He pays such good attention that he knows what is needed even before it is asked.
- The Father is merciful
 - We see his nature in the parable of the prodigal son. (Lk 15)
 - Jesus calls all his followers, but *a fortiori* his priests, to be merciful as the heavenly father is merciful, to forgive as the father forgives. (Lk 6:36)
- The Father instructs those who are docile
 - Matt. 11:25-26: At that time Jesus declared, “I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes; yea, Father, for such was thy gracious will.
 - Matt. 16:17 And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.
 - John 6:44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. 45 It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Every one who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. 46 Not that any one has seen the Father except him who is from God; he has seen the Father.
- The Father disciplines
 - We see throughout the Old Testament how God disciplines and instructs the Israelites.
 - Drawing from these lessons, St. Paul writes, “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”
 - The letter to the Hebrews expands on this discipline of the Father which we’re called to receive and emulate: Heb. 12:5-11: “And have you forgotten the exhortation which addresses you as sons? — “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor lose courage when you are punished by him. For the Lord disciplines him whom he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.” It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers to discipline us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time at their pleasure, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant; later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”

- There is an obvious importance of our disciplining as fathers so that through us the Holy Spirit can form true disciples. We can't have disciples without discipline.
- The Father works
 - John 5:17 But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working still, and I am working."
 - How important it is for fathers in general and spiritual fathers in particular to be hard workers!
- The Father wants to share his child's life
 - John 6:40 For this is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."
 - Priests likewise should make it their will and desire to share that divine life, which they've received in earthen vessels, on to others.
- Conclusion
 - "Do you resolve to guide the holy people of God in the way of salvation as devoted fathers and sustain them with the help of your fellow ministers, the Priests and Deacons?"
 - Let's turn to St. Joseph, who guided the Holy Family on its way here on earth, and ask him to intercede for us, so that with a chaste and devoted father's heart, we may love those entrusted to us and love them toward eternal Love.