



OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON

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June 19, 2009
Solemnity of the Sacred Heart
of Jesus

Dear Brother Priests,

Today our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI inaugurated the Jubilee Year for Priests, which coincides with the 150th anniversary of the death of St. John Vianney. The year provides an occasion for each of us to renew our commitment to our priesthood and to celebrate our vocation with our brother priests and the faithful worldwide.

As our Holy Father writes in his letter to proclaim the anniversary year, this observance “is meant to deepen the commitment of all priests to interior renewal for the sake of a more forceful and incisive witness to the Gospel in today’s world.”

He continues, “I think of all those priests who quietly present Christ’s words and actions each day to the faithful and to the whole world, striving to be one with the Lord in their thoughts and their will, their sentiments and their style of life. How can I not pay tribute to their apostolic labours, their tireless and hidden service, their universal charity? And how can I not praise the courageous fidelity of so many priests who, even amid difficulties and incomprehension, remain faithful to their vocation as ‘friends of Christ,’ whom he has called by name, chosen and sent?”

The entire text of our Holy Father’s letter is enclosed as a means to help each of us prepare. The Jubilee Year will begin in this archdiocese at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception this Saturday, June 20, with the ordination of seven men to the priesthood. In the weeks ahead, you will receive information and resources to assist in the local observance of this Jubilee Year in the Archdiocese of Washington.

With gratitude to you for your priestly ministry, I am

Faithfully in Christ,

Archbishop of Washington