

5) *Fostering Vocations to the Priesthood in the Church*

499 A vocation to the priesthood is God's gift to an ecclesial community and at the same time the fruit of the spiritual life of a community—the family and the parish. That is why the Church prays ceaselessly for good and holy vocations to the priestly ministry. The Church provides appropriate preparation for those called by God. This is so that they can be open to receive the grace of the priesthood—to serve God's people. During this preparation, the candidate grows in the spirit of prayer, knowledge of the Church's teaching, and skill in leading others on the path of salvation. Responsibility for the preparedness of the candidate to the priesthood lies with the bishop, who entrusts him with a ministry in the Church. The ecclesial community, for its part, upholds him in his ministry:

For the good shepherd, who is such as Christ wishes for, is compared to a thousand martyrs. For the martyr died once for Christ; but this man dies ten thousand times for the flock, if, that is, he be such a shepherd as he ought to be; for such a one can die every day. And therefore you [i.e., the laity], being acquainted with what the labour is, cooperate with him, with prayers, with zeal, with readiness, with affection, that both we may be able to boast of you, and you of us.³⁷²

D. Special Occasional Prayers, Blessings, and Consecrations

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in a//godliness and dignity. This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Tim 2. •1-4)

500 Special occasional prayers or services (grouped under the category called *treby* in Ukrainian) are an entreaty to God, to the Virgin Mother of God, or to the saints for care, protection, or intercession. They can be for either the ecclesial community or individuals. In these prayers the Church, like a compassionate Mother caring for her children, whether living or deceased, prays for their salvation. Through these prayers of the Church our vocation to sanctify every aspect of our life—that is, to fill it with the memory of God's presence in all—is realized.

³⁷² JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, Homilies on Romans 29, 5: PG 60, 660.

1. Consecrations and Blessings

501 The Holy Spirit, who is "everywhere present and fills all things," gives life to the faithful and sanctifies them both in the Holy Mysteries (Sacraments) and in diverse blessings and consecrations. Through them the transfiguring power of the Risen Christ continues to work in us and all creation. The Church instituted these different consecrations and blessings according to the needs of the people. These consecrations and blessings, of every human need, together with the rites of the Holy Mysteries, comprise the liturgical book called the *Trebnyk* (Euchology).

a. Consecrations

502 The consecrations that the Church performs are realized by the grace-filled action of the Holy Spirit through the prayer of the community of the faithful. The Church consecrates persons for a particular service to God. It also sanctifies different objects, thereby removing them from everyday use and designating them for liturgical use. The consecration of persons or material objects brings about in them a greater nearness to God. This will continue until all has been united in Christ as Head in his glorious second coming, when all will be manifestly glorified (see Eph 1:10). The consecrations of people and things that the Church performs now are signs of that full glorification in the future. The Church consecrates persons to ecclesial ministry in the orders of candle-bearer, reader, cantor, and subdeacon. The attainment to each of these orders is testimony to the attainment of a spiritual maturity required for each ecclesial ministry. The interior readiness to shine with faith and render service by the word is symbolized by the objects used during the consecrations, such as a candle or the Epistle Book.

b. Monasticism

503 Consecration to the monastic life corresponds to the three stages of spiritual growth: a beginning, the consolidation, and perfection—or the novitiate, monastic life, and the schema (that is, perpetual vows). The rites and prayers of the small schema (gradual introduction into the monastic or consecrated life), as well as those of the great schema, are the source for our understanding of the monastic state and its profound significance. These are: the calling from God, a renunciation of the world and of all that is in the world, and a lifelong following of Christ for the sake of the heavenly kingdom in the spirit of the monastic or religious community's founders. Various signs and symbols convey this meaning. Among those signs and symbols are the vesting, the tonsure, reception