



Asian Journal of Religious Studies

“The Lord is truly among us.”

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Editorial

Encouraging and Supporting Brother Priests

Pope Francis' letter on the 160th anniversary of the death of the Curé of Ars, St John Vianney: support, closeness and encouragement to all priests who, despite their hard work and disappointments, celebrate the sacraments every day and accompany the people of God. Through his letter, he expresses his thanks for the daily service of so many priests who accompany the people of God in every part of the world

The scandal of abuse, the cry of dismay from the victims who have suffered unimaginably weighs down like a burden on the shoulders of every priest. There are priests who are looked upon with indignation, suspicion, through no fault of their own, but who remain bleeding wounds for the entire ecclesial body, recalls the Pope.

Pope Francis calls Curé of Ars, a model priest who served the people of God. The letter is broadly divided into four parts: Pain, Gratitude, Encouragement and Praise.

The Pope, who certainly did not falter in the face of the duty to denounce and reprimand when necessary, responds by thanking the silent army of priests who betrayed neither faith nor trust. He showed his closeness, encouragement, support and comfort to all priests in the world. To those priests who every day, often with difficulty, defying disappointment and incomprehension,

keep the churches open and celebrate the sacraments. To those priests who, overcoming sadness and habituality, continue to put themselves at risk in welcoming those who need a word, comfort and accompaniment. To those priests who daily visit their people, giving themselves up unreservedly, crying with those in tears and rejoicing with those in joy. To those priests who live "in the trenches", who sometimes risk their lives to be close to their people. To those priests who have to go through days and days of canoeing to reach some remote village to go and visit the isolated sheep of their flock, reports Vatican News.

There is a greatness not often recounted in the ordinary life of the Church. A greatness capable of making history even if it will never conquer the pages of guidebooks or the lights of the limelight. It is the greatness of service in hiding, of those who give themselves without being protagonists, trusting only in the grace of God. It is the greatness of a life given to others by those priests "forgiven sinners", as the Pope also defines himself, who have experienced and continue to experience mercy, who leave the initiative to God and follow him in the service of their communities.

There was a need for a word of encouragement, esteem, closeness. There was a need for thanksgiving like that contained in the pages of the papal letter. So that the pain caused to the ecclesial body by the infidelities of a few - as happened with the tremendous plague of abuse - would not risk forgetting the fidelity of many, experienced priests, despite the many labours and human limitations, reports Vatican News.

For this reason, Pope Francis wanted to give thanks to those who still today offer their entire existence to God by serving him in his people, and renews that initial "yes" of their vocation by remembering the call received.

The next issue will discuss this special letter written by a brother-priest to all priests!

-The Editor