

QUALITIES OF A PRIEST TODAY

LAUS TIBI CHRISTE! Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ for the Light of your Truth given to us in the Holy Gospel! LAUS TIBI CHRISTE on this 9th Day of Christmas: for you Lord became incarnate for us to shew us the Way to salvation! LAUS TIBI CHRISTE for the two fathers of the Church we honour today: St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory Nazianzen. We thank you for their sweet friendship, that they were brilliant students, that they remained faithful to you amidst much suffering: Basil, the founder of Eastern monasticism and Gregory, an outstanding theologian and preacher. And LAUS TIBI CHRISTE for giving us our own students for the priesthood. We humbly ask you, Lord, to raise up in our Diocese of Portsmouth many more vocations to all states of life and ministry in the Church, and especially to the sacred priesthood.

I'm very happy we're here today in Bishop's House to offer up this Mass and to spend time together. I hope we can make this an annual event. I'd like to express thanks to Fr. Mark and to Fr. Gerard for all they do. I'd also like to thank you for all you do, for generously responding to Christ's call to discern your vocation, and for engaging in formation for the priesthood. Every morning in this chapel I pray for you, asking the Lord Jesus, whose Heart is burning with love for us in the Blessed Sacrament, to fill you with happiness. Yet, let me recall for a moment the episcopal ordination last September. In the Address at the end of the Mass, I asked people to pray that I might be a "humble and holy, orthodox, creative and courageous" bishop for our diocese. Most of the Catholic press and blogosphere only heard one of those adjectives! But as student priests, I'd like to invite you to reflect on all five. Indeed, I'd like to suggest that in addition to everything else, these are five qualities much needed today, not only of a bishop, but of every priest and of anyone who seeks to serve Christ and His Church: that they be

- **HUMBLE AND HOLY:** that is, a true disciple, rooted in a personal-passionate love for Jesus, a man of prayer, willing to spend an hour a day communing with the Master in the Holy Eucharist
- **ORTHODOX:** that is, authentic, faithful to the Catholic Tradition and loyal to the holy father, a man of study, who loves philosophy and theology, able and willing not only to teach what the Church believes but more, to explain its meaning attractively and with conviction to the people of today; and
- **CREATIVE AND COURAGEOUS:** that is, a man filled with the Holy Spirit, willing to be innovative, to find new ways of spreading the Faith and engaging in a critical conversation with contemporary culture, not fearful of acting as a sentinel nor of challenging our culture even when it might personally cost us very much.

These five qualities are self-evidently found in Saints Basil and Gregory. What's more, their friendship reminds us that we too need good friends. Indeed, we need each other if we are to become what we're called to be.

LAUS TIBI CHRISTE! In every Mass, Jesus lays down his life for us, His Heart burning with love. In this Mass, we call upon the intercession of Basil and Gregory and we pray for one another. May we be truly humble and holy, orthodox, creative and courageous ministers of the Gospel. And let us ask the Lord to pour out upon us the gifts of the Holy Spirit that we may bring to everyone we meet the Love of Jesus, the Gospel of Life, the Way to true, genuine, lasting human happiness and fulfillment.