



Some dispositions are indispensable for being a priest, without which he will be useless, and all his efforts will be futile. Here, we speak of two fundamental dispositions: (1) To have a proper idea of priesthood and its importance, and (2) To make a firm resolve to be a good priest.

Some people consider priesthood a comfortable and peaceful career, a life of prolonged rest & relaxation, a great fortune with the security of life, a life to be lived as one fancy! It is very unfortunate that some priests also think this way!

St. Augustine said, “One may underestimate the value of the priestly life, but, in reality, there is nothing more grave and more difficult than the life of a priest!” The priesthood, rather than prolonged rest & relaxation, is a state of constant tension, suffering and hard labour! Rather than being comfortable and pleasant, priestly life is a series of continuous sacrifices and mortifications! The world may consider it a life of unbridled freedom to do what one likes, but it is not valid!

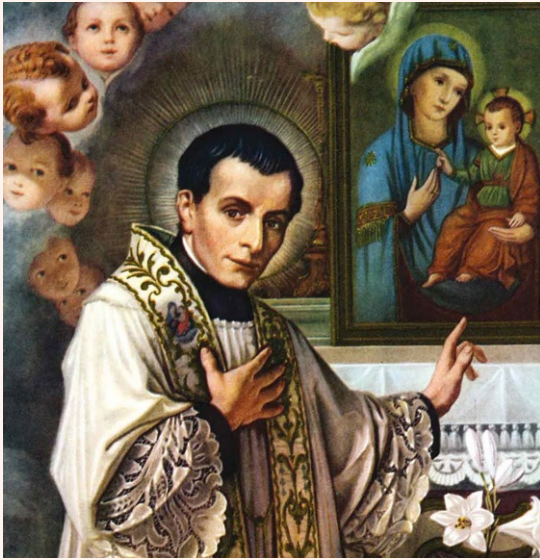
### HARD WORK

In the priest, we have a man who is on his feet always, working and burdened with many tasks of which he has to give an account one day to the Lord! Let us look at the first priest, Jesus. In his hidden life in Nazareth, he was not idle or lazy; he was always at work. In the ministry, too, we see him occupied always, sacrificing even rest & food. Let us look at the Apostles, the first priests. They did as Jesus himself did. They copied his life in ‘living’ rather than in words! Let us look up to other priests who, disregarding their good name or honour, worked hard for many years in the ministry. Let us look at the good priests around us who are vigilant, who toil from morning till evening, who do not have a minute to waste! Yes, God (and the Church) does not want a labourer who does not work!

Pointing to an unworthy example of a priest, another priest might reason this way: “He does like that, so I will also do like him”. Woe to you! Don’t follow others! Everyone has to think for himself! Everyone has to render an account of his own soul! Another priest might reason this way: “It would be

# DISPOSITIONS TO BE A GOOD PRIEST





better if that priest went for confession; it would be better if he woke up early, helped in catechism, in that work, ... he does not do, and no one tells him anything. Then why should I not do as he does!" One who wants to be a good priest should not look at others but at himself and his duties, regulate himself and leave others to think about themselves.

### SACRIFICES

If one wants to be a priest, let him know that priesthood is a state of sacrifices, negations, and privations! The spirit of detachment from everything in the world, coupled with the spirit of silence, prayer, and union with God, is necessary for being a good priest.

Let us go over a typical day in the life of a priest to see how many times in a day alone he has to negate himself! Early in the morning, when the whole world is sleeping, the priest must wake him up, call him and take him to the Church, the Confessional, to pray, etc.! There are occasions in which the priest is part of profane realities, amusements, meetings, and games, ... woe to him if he gives in ... little by little, he will become empty, dissipated, worldly!

Some priests are occupied with the things of the world rather than the things of God, to which they are consecrated! They have stopped living the privations and falsely believe that a priest can be a priest even if he looks for enjoyment and comfort! Worldly things will always surround the priest (they are not bad but secular). The priest should consciously deprive himself of these things or, if he has to use them, use them in a manner that he always has control over. He has to be always ready for his

ministry: for all sorts of persons, for all spiritual services & preaching.

### SIMPLE LIFE & RESERVE

Remember that we have made a solemn profession of obedience, chastity and poverty. Canon Law regulates us. These should not be considered mere counsels for being good or ceremonial norms for outward appearance or to forestall abuses. We cannot hide ourselves from the world: Our every movement, every step, every word, every look, every little act – is noticed, judged, and interpreted by the people! We are subject to this kind of surveillance! Even at his own home, the priest does not enjoy the freedom to be as he wishes! Even there, he is always noticed by those who come in and go out! Everything is watched! So, he has to be reserved always!

"If it is like this, who can live this life? Can we live at all?" a priest may ask. All these are given "so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work." (2 Tim 3:17), i.e., to be perfect as man of God. This is the virtue expected of the priest: in all things, the priest has to be irreprehensible.

One who becomes a priest for human motives (for sustenance, forced by the family, honour of the family, desire of the parents, income for the family, ...): What will he do as a priest? He will do what the other priests do! He will slowly not do the duties, do them badly, and tell himself they are unimportant!

Those who become priests for good motives but who do not realize the importance of their priesthood: When they are encouraged to grow in the spirit of priesthood, exercise virtue, of mortification, flight from the world, silence, etc., they tell you immediately: "I don't feel like going ahead, this is enough, those who want to go ahead, let them do so!" They are half-priests! They are partly of the world and partly of God, given to the things of God and of the world! One day they work and the next day they don't! They can be called amphibian priests! Mediocre priests! They appear to be good priests, but they are not! Such a priest can be compared to the rod of Moses: held in hand, it worked miracles; thrown on the ground, became a venomous snake!

### CONCLUSION

One who wants to be a priest, let him decide to be a priest, ultimately, wholly & totally. No half-measures! Not only in appearance but in truth!

Let us resolve: I am a priest. I want to be truly a priest. I want to be a good priest. I will be dedicated to the things of God and give up all other business. I will make all the needed sacrifices. I want to reach a point of being a priest not only in name but in truth, in fact, in spirit, in heart. ■