



# Bulletin from the Diocese of Santa Rosa



## *The Year of the Priest*

May 2009

My Dear People,

On March 16, 2009, our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI announced that from June 19, 2009, the Feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus to June 19, 2010, the Church will celebrate the “Year of the Priest.” It will also, in fact, be the 150th. Anniversary of the death of Saint John Mary Vianney, the holy Curé of Ars, the patron of parish priests. The Pope mentioned this “Year of the Priest” in order to encourage all priests to strive for spiritual perfection on which the effectiveness of their ministry depends.

This “Year of the Priest” offers us an important opportunity as a Church to contemplate once more and with grateful awe the work of the Lord, who, on the night of the last supper instituted the ministerial Priesthood to carry on his mission through the ages. This can be a year in which we discover anew the beauty and importance of the Priesthood and of each priest. It will give all of us who make up the Church an opportunity to reflect on our need for holy priests to shepherd us in our discipleship.

By deepening our understanding of the priesthood and its pastoral mission, we will realize more fully the indispensable priority of the promotion of vocations to the ordained ministry in the Church and throughout our parishes. It will also give our priests a call to renew the consciousness of their own identity with Christ the One High Priest and to renew their need to be with the Lord in their daily lives through prayer

With the image of the priests in our country battered because of the sins of a few, this year offers all of us an opportunity to realize the great good that our priests have accomplished in this Diocese. Our priests come from many countries and areas to serve us and to bring us the comfort of the sacraments. They have dedicated their lives to Christ and the Church in order to minister to us. Hopefully the celebration of the Year of the Priest in each parish will bring renewed appreciation of our priests and encourage young men to consider whether God is calling them to serve the Church as priests.

Assuring you of my prayers, I am

Your Brother and Servant in the Lord,

Most Reverend Daniel F. Walsh  
Bishop of Santa Rosa