

April 5, 2010

His Eminence  
Cláudio Cardinal Hummes, Prefect  
Congregation for the Clergy  
00120 Vatican City State  
Europe

Your Eminence:

It is with great pleasure that I respond to your letter of February 12, 2010, regarding the initiatives taken in the Diocese of Palm Beach during the *Year for Priests*. Since the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of our Diocese coincided in part with the *Year for Priests*, we had very active and beautiful participation by clergy, religious and laity to both.

On the Diocesan level:

- A pictorial directory was produced of our active and retired clergy
- A prominent page - *Year for Priests* - was placed on our website: [www.diocesepb.org](http://www.diocesepb.org), upon which a monthly calendar of priests appears as well as prayers to be said for our priests. As much as possible, each priest is being prayed for throughout the Diocese on the anniversary of his ordination.
- Prayer cards were distributed to each parish for the priests themselves to pray and for the congregation to pray for their priests
- A special Holy Hour and lunch was held at the Cathedral for all priests of the Diocese.
- The enrichment program *Good Leaders/Good Shepherds*, developed by the *Catholic Leadership Institute*, was introduced into our Diocese and is currently underway. A good number of our clergy are participating.
- Our annual Clergy Convocation in May will address *The Joys and Challenges of Priesthood*, with prominent speakers addressing issues in support of priestly spirituality and daily ministries.
- I invited each priest to have an informal personal visit with me so I could learn more about each personally and affirm each in his ministry.
- St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary, located in our Diocese, will have as its theme for their annual Study Week for Priests in early June, *The Nature and Mission of the Priest*.
- A dinner and social for all the priests of the Diocese was held in one of our parishes in honor of the *Year for Priests* and our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.
- Our Diocesan cemetery, Our Lady Queen of Peace Cemetery, is using the occasion of the *Year for Priests* to make some beautiful improvements to the clergy section of the cemetery.

- 40 Hours Devotion was held in each of our parishes on a rotating basis throughout the year, with the special emphasis of praying for our priests.
- One woman solicited \$1 per person to fund a full page ad in the secular newspaper to publicly recognize our priests. Each person contributing a dollar also commits to saying a *Hail Mary* each day for the priests of our Diocese.

On the parish and/or school level, the initiatives included:

- Various social events such as spaghetti dinners, breakfasts, picnics, etc. at which time the priests of the parish were honored by the faithful
- The Diocesan prayer calendar was used in many parishes as a bulletin insert and/or in naming the priest of the day in their Prayers of the Faithful at Mass.
- Spiritual bouquets were made by school children and distributed to their priests.
- Many special liturgies and events were held on April 25, the World Day of Prayer for Vocations
- Clergy spoke to their congregations about their personal story and vocation.
- A *Prayer for Priests* used to begin or end various parish meetings and events.
- Weekly rosaries for vocations and priests
- School children each given the name of a priest to pray for during the entire year.
- Pictorial displays in parish social halls and schools honoring priests
- Sermons given on the life of St. John Vianney
- Vocations talks given to Youth Groups
- Students honor their priests with gift baskets and plaques at school assemblies
- Newspaper ads taken in appreciation of priests
- Donations to the poor made in the name of priests
- Parish website launched highlighting the Pastor of that parish

All in all, the past year has seen a wonderful outpouring and spirit of appreciation for our priests. So much so that we have been encouraged to continue the calendar of daily prayer for individual priests on our website, which we intend to do.

With gratitude for the Congregation's encouragement during this special year, and with every prayerful wish, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Gerald M. Barbarito  
Bishop of Palm Beach