

A Note on the Laity and the Year of the Priest

By Michael Averyt, Adult Faith Education Coordinator (AFE)

On 19 June, the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Pope Benedict XVI proclaimed the opening of the *Year of the Priest*. This year is 'meant to deepen the commitment of all priests to interior renewal for the sake of a more forceful and incisive witness to the Gospel in today's world.'¹

During this time, the laity has been asked to support our priests in our prayers as they seek to open themselves more fully to the working of God's grace in their ministry.

While the priests are meditating on their vocations, Bishop Thévenot has asked the laity in our Diocese to think about our own calling to the universal priesthood conferred at our baptism. Just as the body cannot function without a head, nor the head without the body, so it is in the Church. Christ cannot function in the world without His body the Church, nor the Church without its head. Similarly, the local churches cannot function without their Bishop or his priestly representatives, nor can they function without the laity, which is their body.

Because head and the body depend on each other to be able to function in the world, the best way the laity can support their bishop and priests is to be faithful in their own calling as part of the body of Christ. In his first letter, S. Peter writes, 'You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.' (I Peter 2:9)

Take some time during the course of this year to reflect on what it means to you to belong to that 'royal priesthood' and think about how you, in your particular circumstances 'proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.' The Diocesan Resource Centre has many materials that could be used to assist you in your meditations, and either Sr. Rose-Marie or Michael Averyt would be more than pleased to help you find what you need. The Adult Faith Education Office is also working on a short Resource and Study Guide on the Priesthood of the Faithful for adult study groups or individuals, to be available later in the year.

Link: http://www.vatican.va/special/anno_sac/index_en.html

¹ Letter sent to the priests of the world on the occasion of the Year for Priests.