



# AD CLERUM

VETUS ROMANUS APOSTOLATUS



## "Tunc Jesus"

A PASTORAL EPISTLE TO THE CLERGY

*Beloved sons*

*"Then Jesus said to his disciples: If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." St Matthew 16:24* These words, my sons, are an invitation. An invitation to embark on a transformative journey, to embrace a life of purpose and meaning. Jesus, the embodiment of love and truth, invites us to shed the shackles of our own self-interests and to rise above our own limitations. He beckons us to leave behind the superficial pursuits that consume our days, and to instead focus on nurturing our souls and serving a higher purpose.

It is no easy task, this call to discipleship. It requires us to confront our deepest fears and insecurities, to challenge the status quo, and to let go of the comfortable and familiar. But in doing so, we open ourselves up to a world of boundless possibilities. By denying ourselves, we discover our true potential - the capacity to love unconditionally, to forgive endlessly, and to bring about positive change in our own lives and the lives of those around us.

This week we remember with great fondness and affection those men who were raised within the sacred ministry a year ago to the priesthood within our apostolate for the Church and others whose anniversaries occur at this time. Their decision to accept the sacred ministry was not merely a choice to deepen their commitment to follow Jesus, but a resolute embrace of both their personal crosses *and* His. Their vocation is not just to be a disciple but to become "*alter Christus*" - another Christ. In accepting the sacred ministry, they willingly embraced not only the joys and rewards that come with this noble calling, but also the inevitable challenges and sacrifices that lie ahead.

True priesthood is the embodiment of a perpetual act of sacrifice. Just as Our Lord exemplified this selfless devotion, so too must those chosen to be "*alter Christus*" offer a continuous surrendering of oneself; echoing the kenosis described in Philippians 2:5-9. Just as Christ humbled Himself by divesting His divine nature for the sake of humanity, we too must tirelessly shed our own human desires to fully embrace and manifest His divine essence.

We are called to become "nothing," just as Christ willingly emptied Himself, as beautifully articulated by St John the Baptist when he proclaimed his own need to decrease for Christ to increase within him, John 3:30. This is to become "*in persona Christi*" - to identify and understand ourselves in Him, and this means enduring all the pain and suffering that goes with surrendering oneself to the Will of God.

We have a tradition after ordaining new priests, to present them first to their mothers giving them a rose tied with the manutergium just used to bind their freshly consecrated hands, and then to a statue of Our Lady there to sing a *Salve*. This custom holds deep meaning and purpose - it signifies the presentation of these new priests as devoted sons to Our Lady. They willingly embrace the challenges and sacrifices that are part of their sacred calling, just as Jesus had foretold when He spoke of the "cup" Matthew 20:22 that His Apostles shared. Like Him, these new priests will offer themselves completely in service to God's Will by participating in His

ultimate sacrifice for humanity's sins: offering not only Christ's sacrifice on the Cross at every Mass but also surrendering their own lives in selfless service to others.

The priestly role, akin to the sacrificial nature of Our Lady's call to the children of Fatima, requires a willingness to embrace suffering in service of God's Will. Just as Sr Lucy, SS. Francisco, and Jacinta were asked to dedicate their lives to God's purpose despite the hardships it entailed, priests within the Old Roman apostolate understand that a life of sacrifice is expected of them. This commitment to living a life of suffering is an integral part of their vocation, demonstrating their unwavering devotion and alignment with God's divine plan.

The role of a priest is not just to believe in Christ, but also to embrace the concept of sacrifice and endure suffering for His sake. The Apostle Paul wrote, *"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him but also to suffer for His sake"* (Philippians 1:29). Father Humbert Clérissac OP, a prominent figure during the turn of the 19th to 20th centuries, wrote, *"that to be truly part of the church one did not only have to suffer for the Church but also at the hands of the church"*. This perspective resonates with Old Roman priests and clerics who strive to faithfully serve the Church, yet often face ridicule and scorn despite their unwavering dedication.

The act of self-sacrifice we engage in is the very reason why the priesthood we uphold is legitimate, our calling is sincere, our practices are orthodox, and yet our ministry is often criticized and belittled. Through this enduring hardship, we align ourselves with Christ who was despised and rejected, a man burdened with sorrow and acquainted with grief. This reference to Isaiah 53:3 aptly captures the essence of our commitment to preserving the genuine Catholic priesthood. *"Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you"* John 15:20.

As members of the Old Roman apostolate, we do not enjoy the same automatic privileges granted to other members of the clergy. We can relate to the words of St. Paul when he said, *"Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day"* (I Corinthians 4:15). These powerful words encapsulate the challenges and hardships that we, as Old Romans, face in our daily lives. Despite the adversity we encounter, we persevere with unwavering determination and a steadfast commitment to our beliefs.

Our unique position as the *"offscouring of all things"* only strengthens our resolve to uphold our values and serve our communities with integrity and compassion. We recognize that our role may not be celebrated or revered by society at large, but we take pride in our unwavering dedication to our calling. It is through our struggles and sacrifices that we find solace in knowing that we are making a difference, even if it may go unnoticed by the world. As Old Romans, we embrace the challenges that come our way, knowing that our faith and resilience will guide us through any obstacle.

One of the prominent difficulties encountered by Old Romans revolves around the prospect of never attaining acknowledgement from the Church hierarchy. Regrettably, apart from a limited number of instances, most Old Roman ministries are not recognized by the Roman authorities. This underscores the depth of our dedication to the timeless faith and teachings of the Church, *we suffer for her sake, but as well at her hands.*

We understand the immense disappointment that arises from this matter, especially for the younger clergy who have a clear and undeniable recognition of God's calling to the priesthood. They have struggled often to realise their vocations, impeded and prevented by those who, it may seem to us, have no understanding of their calling. It is disheartening to witness their dedication and commitment go unrecognized, and to see them not receive the same level of automatic respect and privilege as their fellow priests and counterparts within the institutional Church.

The ramifications of this disparity are far-reaching and often result in unfortunate consequences. One of the most distressing outcomes is the loss of friendships and even familial relationships. It is disheartening to witness the breakdown of these connections due to a lack of understanding regarding the beliefs and values held by those who adhere to traditional Roman practices, especially by those who are fellow Catholics and should have a better appreciation. Yet we do what we do for their benefit, for their salvation, offering the sacrifice of Calvary with our own lesser sacrifices for their sake.

For Old Roman clergy, the journey to priesthood is not merely a vocation; it is a deep and profound commitment to serving God and the community self-sacrificially. Our priests have answered a divine calling that compels them to dedicate their lives to the service of God and neighbour. Yet, despite their obvious unwavering dedication, the length to which they are prepared to sacrifice for the sake of the faith, they find themselves derided and ignored by the institutional Church.

Let us not be deterred by the weight of our crosses, for within that burden lies the strength and resilience we need to navigate the trials and tribulations of life. Jesus, our guiding light, assures us that we do not walk this path alone. With every step, he walks beside us, offering his unwavering support and guidance. Through his example, he shows us the way to live a life rooted in compassion, humility, and unwavering faith. We have great saints to emulate, those who in past times made similar sacrifices in difficult times for the Church. Let us implore their intercession.

My dear sons, I implore you to continue to grasp hold of this profound invitation with unyielding determination. Let us wholeheartedly deny ourselves the fleeting temptations and seeking the superficial adulation of this world and instead, courageously shoulder our individual crosses, as we embark on a path that mirrors the footsteps of Jesus. Through this spiritual journey, not only will we discover the boundless gift of salvation and the promise of eternal life, but we will also unearth the deepest and most authentic expression of our own humanity in union with the mystery of His Incarnation.

Know that I earnestly intercede in prayer for each and every one of you, every day, extending my supplications not only to those individuals upon whom I have personally conferred the grace of holy Orders through the laying on of hands, but to every member of our Old Roman presbyterate. The depth of my devotion and the sincerity of my prayers transcend any boundaries or limitations, encompassing all who are connected to our sacred endeavor.

As I bow my head in prayer, my heart is filled with a profound sense of responsibility to lift each of you up in prayer, seeking divine intervention and guidance for your well-being, prosperity, and fulfillment. With unwavering conviction, I beseech the Holy Trinity to bestow upon you strength, wisdom, and clarity in your endeavors, enabling you to navigate the intricate

paths of life with grace and fortitude. Offering you to the sacred, immaculate and most chaste hearts of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

In my fervent prayers, I implore the divine forces, your guardian angels to grant you solace during times of tribulation, offering you solace and comfort amidst the storms that may assail your lives. As at your ordination, I invoke the intercession of the saints to aid you by their supplications and example. May the knowledge of and power of these prayers serve as a beacon of hope, illuminating your path and providing you with the resilience to overcome any obstacles that may stand in your way. May you remember the strength of St Michael and his armies protect you.

It is with unwavering dedication and utmost humility that I commit myself to this sacred duty, interceding on your behalf with fervor and sincerity. May these prayers bring you solace, strength, and success, as you continue to tread upon the path of life with unwavering determination and grace. May these profound supplications bring you solace during moments of turmoil, instilling within you a renewed sense of strength and resilience. Know that we are together in our self-sacrificing and especially connected every time we share in offering the most holy and august sacrifice of the Mass, by Whom, with Whom and in the person of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

*Oremus pro invicem.*

*J. G.  
+ Joanne Schen*

*Brichtelmestunensis  
Quatuor Tempora Septembris MMXXIII A.D.*