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“Could you not watch one hour with Me?”

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and also, if necessary, admonish them discreetly. Moreover, they should always treat with fraternal charity and magnanimity those who have failed in some matters, offer urgent prayers to God for them, and continually show themselves as true brothers and friends.” (PO 8)

#### b) The Confraternity of Priests in the OA

In the OA, different groups share the same spirituality, but have “specific apostolic tasks” (art. 54). One of these groups is the “Confraternity of Priests” which tries to ‘encourage priestly holiness in the ministry... by fraternal aid, intending thus to do service to the whole order of priests’ (PO 8; cf. can. 277). The Confraternity of Priests, therefore, strives to sustain and to help priests by: preserving the purity of the word of God; re-awakening both an awareness and reverence for God; enkindling new joy and fresh zeal for prayer, divine worship the reception of the Sacraments, and expiation; and promoting obedience towards the Church’s authority, and especially towards the Holy Father. (art. 56)

Juridically, it is determined that the “Confraternities of Priests cooperates with the Order of the Canons Regular of the Holy Cross in its apostolate for the ‘help for priests and religious’ (Const. 55; 11,4). Further, Proven members of the Confraternities of Priests can be joined directly to the Order as secular donates (cf. Const. 17).” (art. 56).

#### 4. Dear Brothers in the Priesthood

To conclude we can do no better than to repeat what Vatican II stressed: “It is very important that all priests, whether diocesan or Religious, help one another always to be fellow workers in the truth (cf. 3 Jn 8).” (PO 8). For this reason all of you are invited to the special retreat for Priests that will be preached by Fr. William Wagner from 18 July-22 July 2011 in Carey, Ohio. The retreat will have, it should be noted, a presentation about and an introduction to the Confraternity of Priests of the Opus Angelorum. Please feel free to invite any other priest, diocesan or religious, that you think might be interested in benefiting from the help that the holy angels can give to their priestly life.

*Fr. Titus Kieninger ORC*

### ASSOCIATION OF PRIESTS IN THE WORK OF THE HOLY ANGELS®

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CHRIST’S PRIESTS UNITED WITH THE HOLY ANGELS IN THE CHURCH

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“Could you not watch one hour with Me?”

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## Association of Priests in Opus Angelorum®

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Confraternity of Priests in the Opus Angelorum

Vol. XVII, July 2011

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#### Dear Brothers in the Priesthood!

There is a mystery, which we never grasp, but which is the basis of all reality, the inner mystery of God Himself: He is One God in Three Persons which means: He is just One in being and yet a Community of persons. We believe it, because God revealed Himself to us. Such mysteries of the faith can become more difficult for us to accept in the measure that they touch upon our lives. This is true for us with respect to the mystery of our priesthood. Let us look at this more closely.

#### 1. “The Spirit will guide you into all the truth”

In the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* we find two complementary observations with regard to all creation: “The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are not three principles of creation but one principle’. However, each divine person performs the common work according to his unique personal property” (CCC 258), so that He “has left traces of his Trinitarian being in his work of creation” (CCC 237). To understand, consequently, the whole truth about any created reality, we should, somehow, always try to perceive in created reality this unity of God as Creator while also paying attention to the Trinitarian print in it.

There is one application with regard to the charism of infallibility of the Church, which however “takes several forms”: First, “the Roman Pontiff, head of the college of bishops, enjoys this infallibility in virtue of his office, ...as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful”; but “the infallibility promised to the Church is also present in the body of bishops when, together with Peter's successor, they exercise the supreme Magisterium...” (CCC 891). Curiously, the first was declared a dogma in the First Vatican Council which, in fact, never was officially closed; and so the Second Vatican Council completed the truth by the second affirmation in the dogmatic Constitution of the Church affirming this privilege for the “the body of bishops when, together with Peter's successor”, that is the many as one, and one even with many (cf. LG 25).

#### 2. “No priest, therefore, can on his own”

The Bishops at the Council made a statement about priests. While it is true that they had in mind principally the pastoral challenge of today, they, nevertheless, made a very profound statement which recalls to mind the Blessed Trinity, the first source of Our Life: In the decree on the Priesthood we read: “No priest, therefore, can *on his own* accomplish his mission in a satisfactory way. He can do so *only by joining forces* with other

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CHRIST’S PRIESTS UNITED WITH THE HOLY ANGELS IN THE CHURCH

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priests under the direction of the Church authorities.” (Vatican II, *Presbyterorum Ordinis* 7).

**a) Trinitarian unions in the priesthood**

In the one priesthood of Christ, we have different reflections of a Trinitarian union: The sacrament of Holy Order itself has a threefold participation, the Bishops, Priests and Deacons.

Furthermore, the ministry of every priest is understood as a threefold *munus*: the ministry of the prophet by preaching, the ministry of the priest in the administration of the sacraments, and the ministry of the pastor or shepherd by assisting the people in leading their lives towards the eternal goal.

And there is this other phenomenon which the Council points out: “No priest, therefore, can *on his own* accomplish his mission in a satisfactory way.” The individual priest, on the one side, by the power of the sacrament, is truly priest, marked for ever with **the indelible character**. Moreover, he is sent into the threefold mission. And, finally, all of these are to be properly fulfilled in union with the “presbyterium”, the communion of (priestly) persons under the guidance of a bishop: For the preaching and prophetic ministry, the priest receives the “faculty to preach” (cf. can. 764 and 765), for the administration of the Sacrament of penance he receives jurisdiction (cf. can. 966-977) and the “*celebret*” to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice (cf. can. 900 § 2 and 903), or he is named a pastor with the necessary rights attached. And for the pastoral procedure, through the narrow world of today, not only his local bishop, but even the National union of the Bishops, the “National Conference of the Bishops” gives directives.

The Council itself recalls the reason or foundation for communion, namely the sacramental bond which unites them in the same priestly Order: “Priests by virtue of their ordination to the priesthood are united among themselves in an intimate sacramental brotherhood” (PO 8). This richness of this formulation, which apparently has not been repeated in subsequent documents, should not be underestimated.

**b) Reasons for communion among priests**

The Council expects, that the awareness of sharing in the One Priesthood of Christ and the capacity to act in His name by the sacramental character should be stronger than any rivalry or pastoral success. Priests should join forces “with other priests under the direction of the Church authorities” (Vatican II, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 7). All differences on the practical or pastoral level, as well as the different duties according the Faithful’s needs or the different personal capacities of the priests should not really lead to a separation of the priests, but rather to a deeper, complementary union. The charitable communication with older or younger priests of sharing experiences or offering assistances, “mutual assistance in the development of their spiritual and intellectual life”, “hospitality, cultivate kindness and share their goods in common”, particularly solicitous for the sick, the afflicted, those overburdened with work, the lonely, those exiled from their homeland, and those who suffer persecution” (ibid.) are so many expressions precisely of one unity: “united with his fellow priests in a bond of charity, prayer and total coop-

eration... they manifest that unity which Christ willed, namely, that His own be perfected in one so that the world might know that the Son was sent by the Father” (PO 8).

**c) Forms of communities of priests**

The Council was very specific: so that priests “may be able to cooperate more effectively in their ministry and be saved from the dangers of loneliness which may arise, it is necessary that some kind of common life or some sharing of common life be encouraged among priests. This, however, may take many forms, according to different personal or pastoral needs, such as living together where this is possible, or having a common table, or at least by frequent and periodic meetings” (PO 8).

**3. The Confraternity of the Priests the Opus Angelorum (OA)**

Different efforts were made to put these suggestions on a diocesan level into practice. There were also founded different Associations for priests on a more spiritual and inter-diocesan level.

Among those we can count the “Confraternity of Priests in the Work of the Holy Angels”, first planned on a diocesan level, now, canonically linked to the Order of the Holy Cross and, herewith, on a rather national level. The Council also suggested such help for priests:

“One should hold also in high regard and eagerly promote those associations which, having been recognized by competent ecclesiastical authority, encourage priestly holiness in the ministry by the use of an appropriate and duly approved rule of life and by fraternal aid, intending thus to do service to the whole order of priests.” (PO 8)

**a) OA is especially intended to be a support to priests**

The specific help given in the OA is that of the holy angels by “an intimate collaboration with the holy angels united with God and redeemed mankind striving for God... a joint action for the building up and consolidation of the kingdom of God on earth” (Statutes of Opus Sanctorum Angelorum, approved by the Holy See 2008, art. 4). For this purpose, “The OA is based on the unreserved readiness to serve God with the help of the holy Angels” thanks to “a conscious and free bond of man to the holy Angels” (art. 9), the “Consecration to the holy Angels” (art. 15). “The OA is especially intended to be a support to priests and thereby a support to the Holy Church ... in the effort for a strong, pure and holy priesthood” (art. 5). “The goal of the OA is the renewal of the spiritual life in the Church with the help of the holy Angels in the fundamental directions of Adoratio – Contemplatio – Expiatio – Missio, which are to be lived and realized in all the branches of the Work” (ibid., art. 10).

As “expiation stands at the center of the Work... for oppressed priests” (art. 13), the entire OA, and not just the Confraternity of Priests, responds to another need for the communion of priests:

“Priests should realize that they are obliged in a special manner towards those priests who labor under certain difficulties. They should give them timely help,