



25th November, 2011

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THE DAY OF THE PRIEST

On Sunday 4th December 2011, the Archdiocese of Malta will celebrate for the first time, the Day of the Priest, with the theme “I am with you always” (Mt 16:20). The main objective is to create awareness with regard to the service which the priest offers for the benefit of the Church and society at large. In this respect, special prayers for the intentions of priests will be offered during all masses celebrated on that day.

The work of the priest is both of a spiritual and material nature. In the name of Jesus Christ and following his example, the priest seeks out the good of all mankind. The priest serves as an instrument in the hands of God; through him, God bestows good deeds upon his children. In executing God’s work, the priest brings people closer to Him, in his conviction that all that is good for mankind comes from God.

A **diocesan priest** through his ordination commits himself to work within his diocese, according to the will of his bishop. On his ordination, the priest promises to respect and obey the bishop of his diocese and his successors. **Religious priests** are members of a religious order or congregation within the Church. A religious priest pledges obedience to his superior; since religious orders are spread throughout more than one diocese, he may be requested by his superiors to provide a service in a different diocese as necessity requires.

Presently in Malta there are 638 priests, out of which 296 are diocesan priests and 342 are religious priests. Over and above the number of priests in Malta, 22 diocesan priests serve in other countries: these are either in the service of the Holy See in Rome or in missionary countries, where the majority of these priests and many other religious priests are located. Out of a total of 70 parishes in the Archdiocese of Malta, 54 are run by diocesan priests, while 16 are run by religious priests.

With the aim of spreading awareness with respect to the mission of priests, the Secretariat for Social Communications has produced a 30-second television spot regarding one of the aspects of a priest’s work in favour of mankind. This spot shows a young priest visiting an elderly person at home in order to offer him the sacraments of reconciliation and the Eucharist. The elderly man is surrounded by his family, who show their appreciation to the priest for his pastoral work. This TV spot may also be viewed on the YouTube Channel www.youtube.com/knisjamalta.

This message regarding priests is the first of a series of similar spots which have been prepared by the Secretariat with the theme “Live your faith”. These spots will be aired on all local television stations **Calypso, Education 22, Favourite, Net, One, Smash, Tvm**. The Secretariat would like to thank these stations for their collaboration.