



Marked by the Life of Service "*diakonia*": Deaconate Ordination of Ronald Baruela, SMM and Lester Bonete, SMM

MAKATI CITY, Philippines – In celebrating the Gaudete Sunday and the memorial of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Philippine Delegation of the Montfort Missionaries rejoices in thanksgiving to God for the Ordination to the Sacred Order of Deacons of Br. Ronald B. Baruela, SMM and Br. Lester C. Bonete, SMM last December 12, 2021, at Sta. Teresita Parish in West Rembo, Makati City by the bishop of Cubao, Most Reverend Honesto Ongtioco, D.D. as the ordaining prelate.

In our Holy Mother Church, a deacon is ordained to serve as an assistant to the pastor. He serves as a vital link between the bishop and the priest in any diocese. The deacon, who has been chosen and strengthened by God's grace, serves the community as well. First, with the celebration of the Eucharist as a volunteer. Second, through the proclamation of the gospel, and third, through charitable efforts on behalf of Christ's faithful. Because of this, he lives his life in accordance with the high standards of his position as a deacon. When it comes to those in need, he must also be empathetic and loving.

In his sermon, Bishop Ongtioco, the ordaining prelate, alluded, *"Every vocation is a gift from the Lord, undeserved yet freely given, unworthily received yet wholeheartedly bestowed. It is this gift for which we give thanks to the Lord."*

While being raised into the order of deacons is an honor, it also carries a tremendous deal of duty. It necessitates the surrender of once whole life to selfless service to God and humanity. As such, this ministry is granted only to people who intend to willingly commit their life in order to fulfill the order's tasks. The ordaining prelate further stated, *"In carrying out your mission, the Lord will work with you and through you. What is important is to root the message into your heart. Things will work out well. It is the Lord who calls. Always dispose of yourselves according to the will of God. It is openness and availability to the will of God that shapes the life of the future priest."*

Furthermore, he continues to relate the joy of waiting for the Messiah into the very joy of humble service. He then expressed *"I asked you to always make visible the characteristic feature of Jesus, the chaste, the poor and the obedient once. Through your ordination to the diaconate, you are consecrated to serve the community in charity and justice. Your life is to be marked by service "diakonia". Humble servant."*

"Your role is to serve. Serve the poor. Serve the priests. Serve the bishop and be initiated to preach the gospel. You are to be faithful to your promises. They are not easy to keep but, with the Lord giving all his graces, you will be able to fulfill your promises." the ordaining prelate added. Bishop Ongtioco continuously encourages the ordinands to be faithful to the vows they professed, he then acclaimed, *"You will promise obedience, simple lifestyle worthy of your vocation. If you can live them well it is because of God's grace. Remain celibate in your ministry, understand celibacy as an act of self-giving, as an act of love for the Lord, for the people, and for his church. Celibacy will free you from the things of the kingdom and make you available to serve God's people with openness. Continue to nurture that fire and zeal in serving the Lord. Obedience is an event, not simply a concept. It is one thing to exceed to the idea of how important one is sent. Obedience to the church is what united the ministries of deacons, priests, bishops and religious."*

Heading towards the end of his sermon, Bishop Ongtioco states *"I will lay my hands on you as a sign of your being set apart and dedicated to the service of God and the ministries of the church. May our Mother Mary continue to keep you under her maternal care and inspire you always to say Yes to God every day. Be like your founder, St. Louis-Marie De Montfort, who was available, and he reach out always to poor people. Believe what you read, teach what you believe, and practice what you teach."*

With grateful hearts, we rejoice in the Lord, the author of vocation, for the gift of Rev. Ronald and Rev. Lester to our Holy Mother Church and to the Montfort Missionaries. We earnestly pray for strength and wisdom to the newly ordained deacons. May our Mother Mary and St. Louis-Marie De Montfort intercede for them in their respective ministries and daily endeavors.

Lord Ansel Glenn Bongcas, SMM