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### **Make the Eucharist central, Pope tells newly ordained priests**

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On Sunday, April 29, Pope Benedict XVI ordained 9 new priests for the Rome diocese, and reminded them that their duty will be to lead the faithful "to true life, to life in abundance." It is traditional for the Pope to ordain priests on the 4th Sunday of Easter, which is known as "Good Shepherd Sunday" because of the week's Gospel reading. That tradition, the Pope said, is "associated with the convergence between the Word of God, the liturgical rite and the period of Easter in which it falls." The day's Gospel is ideal for the occasion, he said, because it reminds the faithful that "the Good Shepherd and the High Priest come together in Jesus."

The Pope reminded the new priests that in preparation for their ordination, they were asked:

Do you wish to be ever more closely united to Christ, the High Priest Who, as pure victim, offered Himself to the Father for us, consecrating yourselves to God together with Him for the salvation of all mankind?

With an affirmative response, the Pope continued, "the priest becomes uniquely involved in the mystery of Christ's sacrifice, through a personal bond with Him that prolongs His salvific mission."

Pope Benedict exhorted the newly ordained priests to center all of their pastoral work around the celebration of the Eucharist. He said: "The preaching, works and other activities which the Church carries out with her many initiatives would lose their salvific fruitfulness if the celebration of Christ's sacrifice were lacking."