

Homily at the Priestly Ordination of Cay Xuan Trinh
St Patrick's Cathedral Ballarat,
Saturday, November 23, 2024

We come now to the ceremony in which Cay will be ordained to the priesthood. I invite you all to consider the mission he will have within the community of the Church.

We rejoice that God has made the entire people a royal priesthood in Christ. We also give thanks that Christ has called some of his followers to fulfil a particular priestly ministry.

Jesus was sent by the Father to bring us the good news of God's love and he in turn sent the apostles to spread the good news throughout the world. Through them and their successors, Jesus continues his service as Teacher, Priest and Shepherd. Priests are co-workers with the order of bishops. In communion with the bishops, they provide priestly service to God's people.

Our brother Cay has come to us from his homeland of Vietnam. We give thanks for the gifts he received in his family. His father and mother were his first teachers in the Christian faith. By their words and example they showed him the way of Christ. His family and friends supported him as he grew to maturity.

Cay sensed a vocation to serve as a priest. He was open to coming to serve in Australia. He has seriously considered this step and prepared for this service for the past seven years, through studies at the seminary and through pastoral service in various communities of our diocese. Now he is to be ordained to the priesthood in the order of presbyters for the diocese of Ballarat.

We give thanks for the gifts that Cay brings to us – the gifts he has received from his family, the gifts he has developed through his training. We pray that he will be blessed as he uses these gifts to serve the community. Cay is called to follow Christ the Teacher, Priest, and Shepherd. He is to be moulded into the likeness of Christ, the supreme and eternal Priest. By consecration, he will be made a priest of the New Testament, to preach the Gospel, sustain God's people, and celebrate the liturgy, above all, the Eucharist.

Cay, you are now to be ordained as a priest. You must apply your energies to teaching in the name of Christ, the chief Teacher. Share with all people the Word of God that you have received. Meditate on the Scriptures, believe what you read, preach what you believe, and practice what you preach. Let the doctrine you teach be true nourishment for the people of God. Let the example of your life attract the followers of Christ, so that by word and action you may build up the house that is God's Church.

In the same way, you must carry out your mission of sanctifying in the power of Christ. Your ministry will unite the spiritual sacrifices of the faithful to the sacrifice of Christ, which will be offered sacramentally through your hands. Realise what you are doing and imitate the offering you celebrate.

When you baptise, you will bring new members into the people of God. In the sacrament of penance, you will forgive sins in the name of Christ and the Church. With holy oil, you will relieve and console the sick. You will celebrate morning and evening prayer and offer thanks and praise to God throughout the day. You will pray for the needs of people throughout the world.

In the words of the prophet Isaiah, you will be anointed to bring good news to the poor, to bind up hearts that are broken. In the words of the apostle Paul, all of us, in union with Christ, form one body, and we belong to each other. Each has their gifts. Each is invited to use their gifts generously and cheerfully for the good of the community. In the words of the gospel, you are called to follow Christ who came not to be served but to serve and to give his life for others.

May you be richly blessed as you share in the ministry of Christ the Priest. May you be filled with the fruits of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, patience, faith, gentleness, kindness and goodness. May you be like the Good Shepherd who goes out in search of those who have strayed.

Finally, may you foster the unity for which Christ prayed. Do all you can to bring people together as the family of God. Help them to live as brothers and sisters who truly care for one another. Lead them, through Christ and in the Holy Spirit, to God our Father.

May God be with you in all you do.

Bishop Paul Bird CSsR