



## In Joy and Hope

by

Archbishop Thomas J. Murphy

### Homily for ordination to priesthood

We gather this morning in this Cathedral Church to celebrate. We celebrate a ritual which gathers people from the Church of Western Washington and beyond to recognize and appreciate the commitment made by three men who we can call son, brother, friend. We celebrate today the calling forth of Robert Anthony Camuso, Tuan Nguyen and John Joseph Wilkie from the community of God's baptized people who are asked to serve us as priests.

The ritual this morning is powerful in word and symbol. We have heard God's word proclaimed to us which tells us that the Spirit of God comes among us. But we are asked not only to receive this gift, but to share it by announcing the Good News, healing the brokenhearted, proclaiming liberty to people held captive by fear, doubt, uncertainty. We are challenged to live lives worthy of our calling, lives characterized by patience, humility and meekness which calls us to unity. We do that best when we serve one another and build up the body of Christ. And the word of God asks us the same haunting question of Jesus to Peter. "Do you love me?"

#### **"Do you love me?"**

What follows in the ritual is really a response to this question, "Do you love me?" In a special way, this question is directed this morning to Bob, Tuan and John. The Lord asks if you love him enough to recognize that priestly ministry is service offered not on one's own, but in union with those who have gone before us, the holy women and men, the saints, and we dare to ask them to pray for us? The Lord asks you whether you love him enough to be open to the laying on of hands which demands that you open up your lives to the Holy Spirit and to share the gift of ministry with others.

"Do you love me enough to be consecrated?" the Lord asks as well – to be open to allowing holiness from God and people to touch your lives and to share that presence with others? Do you love me enough to lead people in the celebration of the Eucharist with the willingness to take bread and break it, to take wine and to have it poured, and to be willing to experience being broken and poured out as well.

God's love can be very demanding. Bob, Tuan and John, you are also asked to reflect your love for God and people by a willingness to commit yourselves to a lifetime celibate commitment and a promise of obedience. May these commitments be enriching for you and the people whom you serve.

#### **Gratitude to others**

The Lord asks the question, "Do you love me?" and we are able to answer this question because of the love and support others have shared with you. Bob, Tuan and John – may you recognize the love that your parents and families have shared with you and given to you. May you recognize and appreciate as well the gifts of formation and education offered to you by the seminaries of Mount Angel, Theological College and St. Meinrad's. We are grateful for the presence of representatives from these seminaries who are here with us here today. May you especially be grateful to the people in the parishes of Western Washington and elsewhere who have invited you to be a part of their lives and enrich you in powerful ways.

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## Homily for ordination to priesthood

Bob, Tuan, John – today, you are being ordained priests to serve God's people. You have a special ministry to preach the word of God, to celebrate the Eucharist and other sacraments, and to gather together and lead God's people. You do not share this ministry alone. Rather, your ministry expects you to awaken the gifts of ministry present in all of God's baptized people. Just as it is impossible to support lay ministers who do not encourage and promote vocations to priesthood, it would be a contradiction of your service as priests not to call forth the gifts of the laity in our local church.

### **The challenge of priesthood**

In a few moments, Bob, Tuan and John, you will lie prostrate on the sanctuary floor. It is the sign and symbol of your willingness to allow God's grace and love to touch your whole selves. May your ministry as priests enrich the lives of others. May you be reconcilers and prophets, hearers of God's word and proclaimers of that same word. May you be priests who build up the community of God's people, and may you retreat into the solitude of God's presence.

"Do you love me?" The same question asked of Peter centuries ago is asked of all of us this morning. May our response be one that reflects a loving service of God and God's people. My friends, Bob, Tuan and John – you are to be anointed; you are to be consecrated; you are to be blessed. Live a life worthy of the call you have received. The Lord asks, "Do you love me?" May your ministry be a "Yes" which enables you to be ministers of word and sacrament. Love is an exciting enterprise. Bob, Tuan and John, may the years ahead only be filled with a love for Christ and the people of God. May this love bring you joy, peace and hope in every way possible.