



## *Year of the Priest*

### *June 19, 2009 – June 19, 2010*

#### *Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life Requires a Human Response*

Pope Benedict XVI addressed the “worrisome shortage of priests” in some regions of the world in his message for the 46th World Day of Prayer for Vocations, held this year on May 3. This year’s theme for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations was “Faith in the divine initiative – the human response.” In speaking of the “human response,” the pope said “our first duty is to keep alive in families and in parishes, in movements and in apostolic associations, in religious communities and in all the sectors of diocesan life this appeal to the divine initiative with unceasing prayer.”

Pope Benedict XVI recent declared the next year (June 2009 – June 2010) as the Year of the Priest, in an effort to encourage "spiritual perfection" in priests and for the universal church to pray for an increase in vocations to the priesthood.

The pope was scheduled to initiate special year with a Vespers Service at the Vatican on June 19th -- the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the day for the sanctification of priests.

In declaring this jubilee year, Pope Benedict explained the importance of priests – without which there would be no Eucharist, no mission, and no Church. “It is necessary, then, to ensure that 'new structures' or pastoral organizations are not planned for a time in which it will be possible to 'do without' ordained ministry, on the basis of an erroneous interpretation of the promotion of the laity, because this would lay the foundations for a further dilution in priestly ministry, and any supposed 'solutions' would, in fact, dramatically coincide with the real causes of the problems currently affecting the ministry.”

The Year of the Priest will end on June 19, 2010, during a “World Meeting of Priests” in St. Peter's Square.

