

**HOMILY FOR THE ORDINATION MASS  
OF BROTHER PATRICK MC DAID, S.M.  
AND BROTHER RICHARD VILLA, S.M.**

Our Lady of the Pillar  
St. Louis, Missouri  
August 22, 2008

As we gather here at Our Lady of the Pillar today, as family and friends of Richard Villa and Patrick McDaid, as part of the .greater family of the Marianists, and finally as the Faithful of Christ, to celebrate the priestly ordination of our sons, brother and friends Patrick and Richard, I believe it would be well to reflect the words of Father Chaminade to the first Marianists: "*As I see you now, I once saw you in spirit at Saragossa.*" What do we see now, and what does Father Chaminade see now, and what does he wish us to see, all joined here together on this joyous day in the communion of the Body of Christ, joined with the communion of Saints?

Richard and Patrick, as Father Chaminade *sees you now*, he sees the lives and faith of your families and friends gathered here, and others as well who helped bring you to this day by their love and example of their faith. The discerning of a vocation to consecrated life and the priesthood of Jesus Christ is made possible through the voices, lives, lived faith and witness of those whom the Lord Himself sends our ways. Richard, you were reflecting last night that that it was the support of the Brothers and their community life that were like a light bulb that showed the way. Your reflection, Patrick, was that from your family to religious life was a natural transition: where families keep one humble, the Brothers keep one grounded! Hearing the voice of the Lord to "come follow me," listening to the many incidents and people the Lord keeps sending our way over the years, so that we finally say, yes we can do this ... or it might be as clear as having one's name written out on a piece of paper and pulled out of a drawer to see who had a religious vocation! None of those events are by accident; rather they are part of the Lord's providential plan for His will and call for both of you!

What else would Father Chaminade *see today, that he once saw*? He sees us gathering at this Eucharist, listening to the same Scriptures that he once undoubtedly listened to, which form a framework not only for the lives of all of us, but in particular for the lives of those who are called to priestly service. Your lives as priests of Jesus Christ in the context of your Marianist vocation, will mirror the words of the Sacred Scriptures in today's liturgy: *"To do the right, to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God ... to live a life worthy of the call you have received so that the Body of Christ will be built up."* The Gospel you have chosen for today is the beautiful chapter at the end of St. John's Gospel where Jesus asks Peter three times if he loved him. It ends simply with the words "Follow me." It is in fact one of my favorites from my own priestly ordination and later on as a Bishop. You have been doing that in your vocation as religious of the Society of Mary, and you will now "follow him" as priests in that same Society. Having followed Him has already taken you in many and varied assignments as Marianists, and your daily prayer must be marked even more by this same dialogue as Peter had with the Lord: "Do you love me, you know that I love you." Your priestly identity, which will be formed by this dialogue and the events of your daily lives in ministry, *"must never be likened to any secular title or confused with civic or political office. Rather, configured to Christ who emptied himself taking on the form of servant, the priest lives a life of simplicity, chastity and humble service, which inspires others by example."* These are the words of Pope Benedict XVI which clearly and beautifully fit what you are about to undertake.

What kind of world did Father Chaminade *see today, that he once saw*? In the world in which he was chosen to minister, and the world in which you have been, and where you will be now missioned as priests of the Society of Mary, there are in fact some parallels: the indifference to Faith and the at times hostile reaction to the proclamation of the Gospel by the surrounding culture in the time of the French Revolution, which are certainly present in this post modern culture. The pressure to give allegiance to other values and realities other than the Lord are certainly among us today. Yet, in all of this people and students who cross your paths will be looking for the light of the Gospel to be mirrored in your lives. There

have been, and there will be events that are hard to understand, and are troubling and can even be unsettling. Yet in the midst of all of this, the presence of Christ will suddenly be visible as the sun coming out or the light in the room. Father Chaminade once said in the midst of the turmoil and terror of the days of the French Revolution that *"What is a faithful man to do in the chaos of events which seem to swallow him up? He must sustain himself calmly by Faith. Faith will make him adore the eternal plan of God. Faith will assure him that to those who believe in God all things work together for the good."*

What else would Father Chaminade *see today, that he once saw?* We are gathered in this beautiful house of God dedicated to Our Lady of the Pillar: Thus, he once saw and sees the necessity and importance of devotion to the Mother of God in your lives and ministry. One of Father's prayers was *"May the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit be glorified in all places through the Immaculate Virgin Mary."*

May the example of Father Chaminade help you and all of us to see that the prayers and example of the Mother of God show us how to trust, how to be open to the will of God, and how nothing is impossible for God. May she lead you to her Son, the high priest, each and every day of your priestly ministry: through the prayer of the Church, the Eucharist and all the Sacraments and all the events and countless appointments which you fill yours lives in the days and years ahead.

You have just finished your studies in Rome. As I finished mine a group of my classmates at the North American College in Rome sang to me *"Ad multos annos."* While it was and is a toast, it is also a statement of Faith and prayer. My prayer for you both, and I believe for all of us here today, is that your years of priestly ministry will truly reflect the glory of God for all to whom you are sent. Father Chaminade saw the glory of God in his many years of priestly ministry, and we see it in our brothers here today: you are our ordinands and the Marianists gathered here.

God bless you always.