Priesthood as Stewardship

Time, Talent and Treasure

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Ongoing formation course to priests of Kabale diocese, on renewal of priestly ministry through increased attention to Jesus the divine Master: improving our relation with him, exercising our pastoral ministry as a constant response to his commands, and as members of his mystical body, in the actual existential situation of the Jubilee year of God's mercy

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Introduction

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Praver
Self-introduction
       My names and present appointment
       Each introduces themselves in the same way
Introduction of topic
        We identify ourselves with the work we do
        And we do different jobs
        However, there is one task which we all have in common as priests
                We are custodians of God's people
                To lead them to salvation
                This we do in the different jobs we are assigned
                By fostering others' salvation we foster our own
                        Peter, do you love me? Feed my sheep...
                       You did not choose me, no, I chose you... to bear fruit that lasts
               Our success or failure is measured upon that
        Our topic for renewal is: Priesthood and Stewardship
                To what extent is my work oriented to my vocation of saving souls?
               Where do I need to improve?
       Things to note:
                It is not possible or necessary for me to know how well I am performing
                        God does not expecting me to lead others to salvation single-handed
                        Rather, I am part of a team through which HE leads people to salvation
                       All he asks of me is to do my part to the best of my ability
                       Nonetheless, it is important that I know the general plan
                That general plan is attained in the sum of many little things
                       In the quality of my prayer life
                       In my dedication to duty, hard work, sense of responsibility
                       In a life of virtue which edifies others
                               Love, compassion, generosity, kindness
                               Honesty and truth, reliability
                               Fidelity, endurance, perseverance
                               Prayerfulness, reverence for the sacred, etc
Approach
        We shall have inputs on a number of selected topics
        We shall have plenty of sharing on given topics
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The mornings will be for the inputs, the afternoons for group discussion

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Content of the inputs

Know better the mind of the one who called me through:

Prayer
Liturgy
Reading and meditation on the scriptures
Living the Christian life "If you make my word your home..." (John 8:31-33)

Know the task assigned to me

My work
The people I serve
The people I work with

The bishop
Fellow priests
The Christian community,

Know the resources at my disposal

Time
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Questionnaire

Talent Treasure

How do I lead others to salvation through my particular assignment?
Which of my present activities are geared to my calling?
Which of them are indifferent to that calling?
Which of them are counter-productive?

As stewards we should know the mind of the Master

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There is a tendency to take over from God
        We use the possessive pronoun in ambiguous ways
                My parish
                My parishioners, my choir
                My curate, my secretary, my cook
                With the use of the pronoun we tend to think we own the things we refer to
               We can even talk of "my God"
                       Not as the God to whom I am subject
                       But the God who attends to my personal needs
        We can succumb to the temptation to act as the owners
                Refusing a transfer, because of personal projects
                Treating parish property as personal property
                Even treating people as our own: eating the sheep
                Initiating projects with no reference to God
                Failing to continue what our predecessors have started
                Prioritizing personal interests before those of my assignment
                Under-valuing teamwork, working as individuals
       There is a dignity we inherit simply by becoming priests
                The honor given by the people to their priests
                The property of the Church at our places of work
               The people who are our subjects; the leadership role we assume
                The belief that a priest is a man of God
               The power to do what others cannot do; the administration of sacraments
A steward is not the owner; he takes care of the interest of the owner
       I will send you shepherds after my own heart... (Jeremiah 3:15)
        You did not choose me, but I chose you... (John 15:16)
        Just as the Father sent me so I send you... (John 20:21)
       Just as you sent me into the world, I have sent them... (John 17: 18)
He listens to the instructions of the owner
        He who does not gather with me scatters... (Luke 11:23; Matthew 12:30)
       It is not those who call me Lord, Lord... Matthew 7:21)
       If you abide in my word, then you are my disciples indeed... (John 8:31)
Looking to the owner for the necessary tools to do the job
       Without me you can do nothing... (John 15:5)
      "I will be with you, do not be afraid"
                Moses (Exodus 3:12)
               Isaiah 40:10
Working in harmony with others
      So we, being many, are one body in Christ... (Romans 12:5)
     You too are living stones being built into a spiritual house... (1 Peter 2: 5)
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Through Prayer

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Self examination
        What is your attitude to prayer?
        What is your experience of prayer?
        What are your aspirations regarding prayer?
        What are the usual obstacles to your prayer?
Prayer as listening to God, as receiving guidance, direction, discerning God's will
        Be still and know that I am God
        There is a kind of prayer that does not help us to discern God's will
                When we talk to God and do not listen to God
                When we simply fulfill a duty
                When we do not do what God asks
               When we lean too much on obtaining divine favors
       There is prayer from which we emerge strengthened, enlightened, renewed
Prayer as gaining strength from God
Two things that matter with regard to prayer
        Content, quantity
               It is convenient to argue that it is not the amount of words
                Yet it is possible to pray less than is sufficient
                In my experience
                        Whenever I was in serious sin
                        Whenever I had no inner peace
                        Whenever I lacked inner energy
                       I also had slackened in private prayer
                        At those times the liturgy was also laborious
                       Relations also were sore
                Part of the strength of Islam is in frequent prayer
                We have a minimum of prayer
                       The breviary
                        The Eucharist
                        The Rosary
                       To this add meditation
        Quality of prayer
                Praying with the heart
                Listening to the words
                Confessing when in grave sin
                Prayer of surrender
                Nourishing prayer through spiritual reading
                Poverty of spirit
                      Not poverty in material things alone
                      But denial of all that which is not permitted us creates poverty of spirit
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In the Liturgy

We are sanctified by what we touch everyday If we strive to understand what we do If we prepare thoroughly If we purify our hearts before celebration The Sacrament of Reconciliation Share your experience of difficulties of going to confession Share your experience of the benefits of going to confession Effects of this sacrament Unrepented grave sin makes us lose taste of divine realities The sacrament of penance unblocks the valves of divine grace The Eucharist Share your experience of hearing a good homily Share your experience of the worst homily you ever heard Do you recognize yourself in others' sharing of good and bad homilies? There are obviously those more gifted than others in preaching And good orators are not necessarily saints While poor preachers can be very effective priests in other ways However, we all have room to improve Nourish homily delivery with a prayer life Take time to prepare Do spiritual reading Know the people Pope Francis has something to say about priests' ministry of preaching... Daily self-oblation Experience of the priest at the Eucharistic congress Fr. George and daily offering at Mass

In the work assigned to us

He who listens to you listens to me... (Luke 10:16) God speaks to us through our superior's decisions for us As a child you went where you wanted... Has anyone ever had an appointment they resented and later liked? God is the master planner, we are laborers Think of an architectural work The small laborers do not know the full plot Yet by faithfully doing their little bit they contribute to the beauty of the whole Avoid the temptation of neglecting duty to do what you think to be best Share your experience of transfers

In the sudden, the interruption, the unplanned, the undesirable

Have you ever carefully planned your day which ended totally differently?

Suffering undue interruption

Encountering situations of need beyond your means

Finding the people selfish and inconsiderate?

What is your typical reaction?

You are right not to turn yourself into a door mat

Yet such situations may also be opportunities to love, to grow

Share on the parable "At the Water's Edge" (see last page)

Our Stewardship can be seen in three perspectives

Time

Our general attitude regarding time We think of time as something we own I plan my time I use my time profitably I waste my time Do not waste my time We rarely thing of it as something we have to account for Some have come to know that time is precious We are aware of the secular saying that "time is money" Yet time is much more precious than money Time is life Time is the raw material for determining our eternal destiny The time we have to forge our eternity is from now to our death Many of us may already have gone through half our time No one is too young to die Time is a gift of God to be used responsibly There is a time for everything (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8) Time is short: Our span is 70 years... (Psalm 90:10) The hour has come for you to wake from sleep (Romans 13:10) "Late have I loved thee..." (Augustine) Yet Augustine woke up not too late How do you spend your typical day? Go through the activities of a typical day. Or choose a specific day When do you wake up? What are the series of normal daily activities? When do you go to bed? What time did you spend profitably? What time did you waste? What time did you misuse? Do something you should not have done? Symptoms of poor time management Feeling overwhelmed by the number of things we have to do Constant irritation by interruptions after careful planning of time Dismay that time goes yet you accomplish so little Over-estimating the amount of time you have Under-estimating the amount of time each activity takes Thinking that the busier you are the better we use our time Unable to distinguish between the most important and most urgent Not knowing what we want to get out of our time

Not able to know when we have got what we wanted out of our time

Thinking that we have so much time when we actually don't

Or thinking that there is little to do when actually there is a lot to do

Thinking that there is too much to do, when there is hardly anything important Improving our time Management

Are you satisfied with the way you use your time?

What are the things that are given more time than they deserve?

What are the things that are given less time than they deserve?

What are the things that are given no time and should have it?

What are the things that have no right to have time and yet have it?

Times for Time management

Plan each day

Jot down things you intend to do

Not the most important among them

Avoid being too ambitious, be realistic, consider the available time

If you can't do this on paper at least do it in the head

Prioritize your work

Know time when you are most alert and awake

Let the more important activities take this time

Take time to do a quality job

Assign less important activities to time when you are less active

Or assign this time activities you can do with less concentration

Create order around you

Office, bedroom, work place, etc

Lack of order makes it difficult to get what you want quickly

It also increases frustration and stress

If you are a workaholic, schedule time to rest

Schedule time to rest and relax

Respect your annual leave

Take a weekly or monthly day of rest

Have enough sleep

Learn to say "no" to non-essentials

Do not easily give in to request for which you don't have time

Drop undertakings that are of little value

Learn to say "later"

Delegate where possible. (Read Exodus 18:17-24 and Acts 6:1-7).

Evaluate how you are spending your time.

Locate time that you could use more profitably

You can choose to wake up earlier

Or to watch less TV, or less socialization

Or reduce on the siesta

Sharing:

In your view which social activities are a waste of valuable time? How can time be better used? How are priests involved in planned activities of the diocese? What areas need improvement? What are the minimum common activities of a healthy parish community?

Talent

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We think of talent as a special gift
        We talk of someone being talented
        We can name our specific talents, e.g. football, or music, or preaching
       We may regret that some of our talents are no longer applicable
       Or we can think of others as more talented and feel sorry or envious about it
We are using the word in the sense that we are all talented
       All that makes us who we are and with which we can do good
        Our physical body
               The legs to walk and run
               The hands to work
               The eyes to see
               The ears to hear
               The mouth to speak
        Our psychological nature
               Our emotions and how we deal with them in relation to others
               God's gift of will, by which we choose to act contrary to how we feel
               Our intelligence; the ability to decide
               Our memory
               The power of imagination
       Spiritual endowments
               All the acquired skills
                       Your education
                       All mortal skills
               The capacity to pray
               The capacity to develop virtues
                       Generosity, kindness, mercy, forgiveness
                       Endurance, patience, perseverance, discipline, hard work
We often use very little of our potential
       Think of people who are disabled but with exceptional talents
       Example of Stephen Hawking
       Think of priests who are idle because they have not been given work
       How many of your talents are used in the service of God and others?
Questions for self
       What talents of yours have fallen out of use?
       What new skills could you learn?
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Do you have any hobbies?

Treasure

We think of treasure as something precious

There was a time when people hid treasures in the ground

You can think today of treasure as a fat bank account, or a piece of land, or car

While Talent refers to who you are, treasure refers to what you have

Parish land

Money

Personal property

Property of the parish

Funds obtained as donations

We have to give accountability to all this

To receive what we have got with gratitude

To use it for its responsibly for its purpose and for others

To keep proper records and to give accountability

There is a great advantage in being accountable

You gain a sense of inner worth

Your conscience does not blame you, even when things go wrong

You gain the trust of others, they are even willing to give more

It removes ill feelings among co-workers, that the other is oppressive

It is a great lesson in a world that is so filled with selfishness and corruption

Sharing topics

How is money a danger to priestly ministry?

How do we balance appropriate self-reliance with freedom from love of money?

What should be the proper attitude regarding helping dependents?

Stewardship in Teamwork

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The value of teamwork: examples
       Look around you and reflect
               The chair you are sitting on
               The house
               The clothes
               The paper and pen
               Our next meal
               All these
                       Have a long history of evolution
                       Involve the cooperation of so many people
                       Reveal how much we depend on each other
       Think of the termites
               How they start on a dangerous and lonely journey of two
               The division of labor among them
        Paul's Image of the body
               Read the text
                The body is much more complex than that; think of the systems
                       The alimentary system
                       The central nervous system
                       The reproductive system
                       The respiratory system
                       All cooperate in ways we are not even aware of
       The power of the Catholic Church as the strongest institution in the world
                Organized authority
                       In its head
                       In the scriptures
                       In its leadership
                       In its liturgy
                       In its legislation
                       In its endurance through history
               Flexibility to have unity in diversity
                       Division from Pope to parish priest
                       Different congregations
                       Lay apostolate movements
       Oscar Romero's poem
                Read the poem together
               Share what strikes you most
               We are part of a bigger reality we cannot fully envision
               One day we shall have the capacity to envision it and be filled with wonder
              The joy will be in seeing the part I had to play, and how well I played it
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One who fights unity impoverishes self

The enemy has what you do not have

You have what he does not have

If you put your gifts together you would merge stronger than each alone

If you subdue the enemy you rob yourself of his gifts

You are also likely to sustain wounds

Damage of your ability to forgive

Fail in love, move further from God

Grow in false pride

Fear that the enemy may retaliate

One who turns the other cheek:

Might appear a coward

But may be the stronger in the long run

"if you cannot defeat your enemy, join him"

I overhead a man boasting on the street of having subdued the enemy

The adversary instead took him and bought him a bear. Who was the stronger?

Manifestations of individualism in priesthood

Invite sharing

Failure to continue what our predecessors have began

Failure to harness each other's giftedness in the parish

Undermining the success of each other

Slander

Failure to share

Pursuit of individual interests at the expense of interests of the Church

Establishment of clicks

Not getting involved in diocesan meetings

He who knows us so well ardently desires our unity

May they be one as we ourselves are one...

Love your enemies

Be merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful

_His own example...

Considering Kabale diocese, discuss ways we can advance through greater cooperation rather than fight

We are called this year to be stewards of God's mercy

Called to experience God's mercy

Live Lent more intensely

The traditional discipline of prayer, almsgiving, fasting
Journey of conversion
A personal resolution

We experience God's mercy specifically in the Sacrament of Reconciliation
Going to regular confession
Concerted effort to receive the sacrament conscientiously

We make others experience God's mercy through availing this sacrament
Encouraging people to receive it
Establishing times for confession

Called to convey God's mercy

The corporal works of mercy

Feed the hungry
give drink to the thirsty
clothe the naked
shelter the homeless
visit the sick
visit the imprisoned
bury the dead

The spiritual works of mercy

Counsel the doubtful instruct the ignorant admonish sinners comfort the afflicted forgive offenses bear wrongs patiently pray for the living and the dead

How have you experienced the Father's mercy in your own life?

Discuss how we can better live the Jubilee Year of Mercy in Kabale diocese

Which spiritual works of mercy might Christ be calling you to practice? Which corporal works of mercy?

Resources

<u>www.im.va</u> (by Pontifical Council for the Promotion of New Evangelization) www.usccb .org

Evaluation of the Course What has been helpful to you in this workshop? What did you not like? What would you like to be included in similar future workshops?

Parable: At the water's edge

At the water's edge I found a cocoon of a butterfly.

One day a small opening appeared

I sat and watched the butterfly for several hours

As it struggled to force its body through that little hole.

Then it seemed to stop making any progress.

It appeared as if it had gotten as far as it could, and it could go no further.

So I decided to help the butterfly.

I took a pair of scissors and snipped off the remaining bit of the cocoon.

The butterfly then emerged easily.

But it had a swollen body and small, shrivelled wings.

I continued to watch the butterfly because

I expected that, at any moment, the wings would enlarge

And expand to be able to support the body,

Which would contract in time.

Neither happened!

In fact, the butterfly spent the rest of its life

Crawling around with a swollen body and shrivelled wings.

It never was able to fly.

What I, in my kindness and haste, did not understand

Was that the restricting cocoon

And the struggle required for the butterfly to get through

The tiny opening

Were God's way of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings

So that it would be ready for flight

Once it achieved its freedom from the cocoon.

Sometimes struggles are exactly what we need in our lives.

If we were allowed to go through our lives without any obstacles,

It would cripple us.

We would not be as strong as what we could have been.

We could never fly!

I asked for strength...

But I was given difficulties to make me strong.

I asked for wisdom...

But I was given problems to solve.

I asked for prosperity...

But I was given brain and brawn to work.

I asked for courage...

But I was given danger to overcome.

I asked for love...

But I was given troubled people to help.

I asked for favours...

But I was given opportunities.

I received nothing I wanted...

I received everything I needed!

STEP BACK AND TAKE THE LONG VIEW

(Archbishop Oscar Romero – el Salvador)

It helps now and then, to step back and take the long view. The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.

Nothing we do is complete, which is another way of saying that the kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said.

No prayer fully expresses our faith.

No confession brings perfection.

No pastoral visit brings wholeness.

No program accomplishes the Church's mission.

No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow.

We water the seeds already planted,

Knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development.

We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities

We cannot do everything,
And there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.
This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.
It may e incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way,
An opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end result,
But that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.
We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.
We are prophets of a future not our own.