

Letter from Rome n°1

Praised be the Lord, Jesus Christ!

Dear Faithful,



To begin with, please do not wonder that it is an ordinary seminarian not a priest or anyone ranked Superior or holding a strategic position in a community that writes to you. At the Institute of the Good Shepherd things look different. Any seminarian, brother or sister is prepared to take up assignment that by far exceeds his or her competence. This is quite logical though. We are an extraordinary institution, with extraordinary people, engaged in extraordinary pastoral care according to the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite, and last but by no means least, we **EXIST BECAUSE OF EXTRAORDINARY** grace and privilege conferred upon us by His Holiness Benedict XVI! Extraordinary nature is our intrinsic feature, Dear Faithful! So, let this little letter be at least a little extraordinary.

So please let me tell you about new assignment entrusted to me by no one else but the very Superior General, Rev Philippe Laguerie, himself. After the pilgrimage to the Polish main Marian Shrine in Częstochowa and several weeks of meeting people from our circles, I returned to France (seminary in Courtalain) with the-then deacon Grzegorz Śniadoch, to start a six-day retreat. During that time, I was asked to have a word with the superior, who asked me if I felt up to leaving for Rome. I understood instantly that this was not going to be just studies. «Rome» meant love and responsibility — or rather, first and foremost, responsibility... Two days later I was already sitting on the plane, and before the ordination of Grzegorz to priesthood I was given a pastoral programme for the next two years. What was it then?

God definitely does not wish that we should ignore spiritual growth of candidates preparing for ordinations. This principle concerns us also after the sacrament has been conferred. Hence the superiors decided to take a chance and prepare ground for our clerics in Rome. The eternal city gives something called *romanitas* and contact with people of immense culture and spirituality! We cannot afford to have no house for our Pontifical community, and we need (albeit tiny) a place close to the Supreme Pontiff's abode. In our joint efforts, IBP entrusted me with the logistics of Polish seminarians. So please listen to what I want to say about us.

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Now please note that we are not part of diocesan structures, which with the existing complex of several parishes, have a certain financial base. Normally, seminarians who cannot afford to pay for their seminary study, repay the loan extended by a bishop after ordination. Since we have no such complex of parishes, nor have we got any priests who would have had a more solid financial base to help us regularly, this is not the case. What's more, our seminarians are too humble to ask for money. So please, be a good mum to us that piously prays the Rosary and remembers to feed the family or a good father that enters into fierce discussions on forums to defend Holy Tradition every day, gets up to work to bring the bacon home, and carefully watches what his kids do.

Here is something of what your spiritual kids live by. A short story told by a "novice in Rome"

Part I

«The boy landed safely in Fiumicino. He jumped on the train heading for the largest railway station in Rome called Termini. When he left the train carrying his heavy bundle watching closely that no one tears his precious cassock, he looked around the platform impatiently. Here they are! These two strangers wearing cassocks (these days hardly anyone wears anything like that) approached him saying "Welcome to the eternal city, the front awaits you, son...". And at the house ... fees, health insurance, bills and other residential expenses. As if this was not enough, they tell you must have a laptop. Our novice thinks this is too much at once, but after one day at university, he needs no further instruction. Lecturers communicate and transmit scripts and some tests via the Internet. If he had to borrow a laptop each time, co-seminarians would go mad. They must study. And then the printer trouble. You must be pretty kind to get some teaching material printed. Household duties, contacts with others... you need a monthly travel card and a good cassock that does not look like a poor sack worn by the holy Cure of Ars. A thin cassock?! Why? It is dearer! "Yeah, you are right brother novice, but Rome can be hot. So get yourself some deodorants and do not scare people off like the prodigious son. Aaa! I would have forgotten. In November you will be invited to a private audience to see His Holiness. Apart from due prayer, do not forget your snow white nicely ironed shirt". So were passing the days... and our novice, after a week of hard work, sat down to rest, looked at the Crucifix and thought: "Good Lord, major orders ahead, so I shall give you all I have". »

The reality is such that now I am the only Pole here, which should mean, at least theoretically, smaller cost of keeping (the year costs ca. € 9,100) but you do not think that I could be selfish and leave my brethren (currently Mateusz and Karol) at the mercy of who knows what (both are currently in France). Such things are to be planned well in advance. God permit, I should be ordained next year. It is true that I will not return to Poland just yet. I will only assist at symposia and pilgrimages run by Rev. Grzegorz. As a priest of the Institute of the Good Shepherd, I shall continue to care for the life of our small Roman establishment, for other Poles to get better

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conditions, and what's more, to focus solely on the merits — prayer and study.

So how can you help us? What we need is mostly small, but regular **donations such as** €10, €30, €50. The best would be to notify me in advance of the sum you could spend every month. Such arrangement would help my Superior plan the annual budget, as we would know where we are at the beginning of the month.

So, what else can you do for us here in Rome?

- rent us a car for some days or months
- give us petrol coupons
- sponsor liturgical vestments or vessels
- sponsor cassocks
- sponsor air tickets (low cost)
- sponsor study materials
- translate the official IBP site
- verify IBP site

We have received a special account from the Vatican for your transfers; Here it is:

Istituto per le Opere di Religione - Vaticano
IBAN : FR76 3000 400 89 70 000 45 00 17 226
Bank BNP Paribas Paris
with a note (!); *Pour l'Istituto del Buon Pastore —*
389 560 01

I shall be there for you at: s.orzeszko@gmail.com

Please visit our Roman site: www.ibproma.com

When a new generation of seminarians arrives in Rome, I shall leave the eternal *oppidum pulchrum* to return to you and do what I have always dreamt of — run a traditional parish.

In Christo Domino

kl. Sergiusz Orzeszko

IBP Roma