



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP  
DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

October 23, 2017

**An invitation....**

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Pope Francis enthusiastically encourages us to “support your priests with your love and prayers, that they may always be shepherds after Christ’s heart.” This Priesthood Sunday is a special day of gratitude, reaffirmation and celebration for the gift of ordained Priesthood and in particular for the gift of the priests within your parish. While it is true that priests are no longer the only ones who help to offer pastoral care to our people, without a priest, no parish is able to be a Eucharistic community. St. Francis stated in eloquent simplicity “Christ daily comes to us in humble form; daily comes down from the bosom of the Father upon the altar in the hands of the priest.” What a great gift!

It is essential that as God’s people we be prayerfully mindful of this sacred endowment from God. It is important to reaffirm and celebrate the importance of the priesthood of Jesus Christ and its central place in the life of the Church and in particular your parish. Please join me on this special day in praying for our priests, in praising God for their spiritual fatherhood, their courage, generosity and their special love for you.

As your bishop, I also urge you to make your appreciation for your parish priests both individually and as a community. A simple note, a smile or a phone call to assure him of your loving care and gratitude for his presence in the parish would be very supportive. As a community, there could be parish potluck dinner to celebrate “Father’s Day”, coffee cake reception following Masses, a School essay, poster or poetry contest, even banner in front of church. All of these gestures, individual and communal, will go a long way to serve the personal good of your parish and the greater good of our wonderful and growing Catholic Church.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Peter A. Libasci, D.D.  
Bishop of Manchester