

July 2005

Dear faithful and friends of St. Francis de Sales Oratory,

Following the generous invitation of the Most Reverend Archbishop of St. Louis, Raymond L. Burke, the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest begins in these days the apostolic work at St. Francis de Sales Oratory. By this decision of our beloved Archbishop, he has opened for us the door to one of the most beautiful churches of the whole archdiocese that is a very fitting place for the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the other sacraments according to the rites in use in 1962.

This very dignified place for the holy liturgy of the church reminds us of the fact that we do not have to invent traditions, but that we simply find it in the rich heritage of our ancestors that they have confided to us. The tradition of Holy Mother Church leads us back to the origin of this tradition to our Lord Jesus Christ himself, the eternal High Priest. He has given himself to the church in His sacrifice, and in the institution of the sacramental priesthood. We all could not live our vocation to take part in the mission of the church to spread this salvific tradition to the ends of the world, without the sacraments and without the priesthood.

The founders of the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest, Msgr. Gilles Wach and Fr. Philippe Mora, and the members of the Institute have the humble intention to take part in this mission of the whole church. The example of our Patrons St. Benedict, St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Francis de Sales, the “doctor of charity”, encourages us to follow the Institute's motto: “Live the truth in charity” (Eph. 4, 15). It seems to be providential that St Francis de Sales, the great saint who gives to the Institute its spiritual identity, is also the patron of this new oratory.

St. Francis de Sales Oratory will also be the place for the pre-seminary program of the Institute. Young men from all over the country who want to join the spiritual family of the Institute will receive their first step of formation here in St. Louis before they will go to our motherhouse in Italy. By this the new oratory that serves in a larger way the spiritual needs of the faithful than a normal parish will become a true center of ecclesiastical life, according to the will of our archbishop.

It is very fitting that on the feast of the Prince of the Apostles, Saint Peter, and the Apostle to the Nations, Saint Paul, our Most Reverend Archbishop has celebrated the 30th anniversary of his own priestly ordination and at the same time has ordained three new priests in our motherhouse in Gricigliano in Italy, after having participated in the mass of the Successor of Peter, Pope Benedict XVI. Together with our Archbishop we thank the almighty God for the gift of his own priesthood and the rich fruits it has brought to all of us and for the encouraging example of his priestly generosity, strength and charity that is such a great consolation for so many of the faithful. We also want to include in our prayers the young priests that received their priestly ordination from the hands of Archbishop Burke.

As the Most Reverend Archbishop has invited us to begin this work here we in turn invite you to take part in the mission of this new oratory, at first through your prayers, but also by your financial support for a serious restoration of the beautiful church and for the formation of priests according to the heart of the Eternal High Priest.

With the assurance of a continuous remembrance in our prayers and in the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass,

Yours very truly in Christ the King,

Msgr. R. Michael Schmitz
Provincial Superior

Fr. Karl W. Lenhardt
Vice-Provincial, Rector