

What I Do Not Want in My Priest

By Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

My Lord, I cry out to you; hear me, for in my heart there are many worries and questionings regarding my priestly ministry. I have been taught that I am a priest at the altar of the Lord, to serve You by serving Your people, the Church. I have been taught that my priestly ministry has three aspects:

first, sanctification, through serving the sacraments and the various divine liturgical services;

second, pastoral care, through visitation of believers, diligent pursuit of the lost sheep, and service to the weary and the sick;

third, teaching, through evangelism and through proclaiming and explaining the Scriptures to the people, so that they might live in accordance with them.

My Lord and my God, I face many obstacles in my ministry and many different human situations, and so often I stand bewildered, searching for the best thing to do as a priest, according to Your heart and not according to what is comfortable for me. Lead me, my Lord, and enlighten me to walk in the straight path that is well-pleasing to You.

My Son, My heart is with you, and My grace is strengthening you. I will clarify some of the temptations through which you may sometimes be led, and I will tell you the things that I do not want My priest to do. So, listen carefully, My son.

I do not want you to limit yourself to one single aspect of your ministry and forget about the other aspects. For example, do not consider yourself a teacher and neglect serving the sacraments, or vice versa. The priest might be talented in a specific ministry, but this does not justify neglecting the other ministries.

I do not want you to forget that you are My servant among My people. Do not consider yourself to be the sole ruler. Do not forget the love that embraces you, nor fall for the love of power and therefore start micromanaging My parish, instead of ministering to it. When that happens, institutional rules will prevail over the laws of love, communion, and humility.

I do not want you to push away people who serve and who are zealous for the ministry, just because you are not their administrative master, forgetting that your spiritual leadership is more important and that this must lead the institutional aspect.

I do not want you to abide with only the few that suit your taste, thinking that you are doing an honest service and that because some people are not with you, they do not want God.

Do not be silly in your ministry, reducing it to mere worldly social events and amusements, empty of spirituality and not seeking the salvation of those who participate in them.

I do not want you to forget that you should always be filled with the Divine Presence and perfect in humility, so that you can inspire My people to do My will.

I do not want you to be full of yourself, not listening to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit who speaks through My people. I want to speak with you through them, so you will learn that you don't possess me exclusively.

I do not want you to act as a feudal lord, who forces others to labor in his field instead of sharing with them the ministry of caring for one another.

I do not want you to strive only to organize banquets, trips, parties, and festivals to raise money, even if this is for a goal that relates to the church.

I do not want you to be exclusive in your ministry, favoring the talented and the rich, while neglecting those with less talent and less fortune.

I do not want you to forget that you are My servant and work according to My will, and that you are not a master served by My children in accordance with your own will.

My son, I have so much other advice for you. I will not say it all, but take heed of these things I have told you today. Work accordingly, testifying to Me and not to yourself, serving My Church and not treating it like your church, striving to lift My children up to where I am and not pushing them to do your own will.

My son, do you understand what I want?