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THE PRIESTHOOD.

The following paper was read by one of the promoters and first editors of *Excelsior*, at an entertainment given by the Leo Literary Society of the Grand Seminary, Montreal, to the retiring class of '98 previous to the Christmas ordinations:—

In an occasion like the present one when we seminarists see our more favoured ones about to leave us to enter upon their duties in the world without, we are apt to look forward to the time when we shall find ourselves as they do to-night. Then shall it be ours to don the sacerdotal armour and be in readiness to fight the arch-enemy of mankind; then shall it be ours to put on the priestly mantle and preach the Saviour to our fellow-man. What great work shall not then be allotted to each of us, how vast and noble our field of labour! Thoughts such as these engage our attention, as we see before us a chosen number, who, a few days hence raised to the sublime dignity of the priesthood, will receive the commission given to the priests of the Catholic Church to teach all nations. To comply with the duties of this sacred mission will soon be their happy lot—duties for which their own love of study and of piety combined with the untiring zeal of the fathers of the house have so well qualified them.

To understand the dignity attached to such a sacred mission, or to the state of life to which those who are to fulfil this mission have been called, requires a more enlightened mind than I can pretend to possess. However, there are some things connected with this state of life that make even the most casual or unobservant feel convinced that attached to it is the greatest dignity to which man in this life can attain. And who is the priest? He is one chosen by Jesus Christ to continue His work of sanctification upon earth, and to be His ambassador among men. To him has Christ confided what is most precious to Him here below; to him has Christ communicated that most sublime and holy dignity which His Father had conferred upon Himself. Him has Christ selected from the many workers in His vineyard, and after conferring upon him special graces sends him forth to do His own holy will, as He of old sent forth His apostles. He bestows His tenderest care upon him, prepares his heart and mind to heal infirmities in the souls of men, and daily feeds him with spiritual food to build him up in vigorous and manly virtues. How many incomparably greater favors does not the Divine Master bestow