



# "I will give you shepherds after your own heart" (Jer. 3:15)

by Fr Sergio Oter Díaz, sdb

On 30 April 2011, in the Salesian community at Paseo de Extremadura (Madrid), three young Salesians were ordained. Carmelo Donoso was ordained Deacon, while Guzmán Pérez and I, Sergio Oter, were ordained priests.

"I will give you shepherds after your own heart" was the motto chosen for the diaconate and priestly ordinations. It was not chosen in order to remain just on the invitation to the ordination, or just as a reminder of that very special day. It is a slogan that I would want to be the fundamental basis of my life as a Salesian priest, a verse from the Book of Jeremiah which I would like as a summary and synthesis of what it means for me to be consecrated to the Lord.

And it is the Lord who has chosen me, not me who chose Him, who presented himself before me for me to carry out His mission. The priesthood has been, is and will be a true gift, a true gift from God. He has truly led me down this path that really leads to true happiness, true love. It is God who has come to me and called me. It is God who has sought me out, and who, again and again, has been there along my way to make a real gift to me.

The Lord has chosen me to serve his people, the great people of God. He has chosen me to give my life, without any reserve. He has chosen me to cooperate in building his kingdom, here

and now. He has chosen me to pass on to young people, through my own life, a message of hope that comes from the Lord's Pasch. And finally, he has chosen me to serve his people in the image of Christ, the Good Shepherd.

"I will give you shepherds after my own heart" says the Prophet Jeremiah, which means my heart must be shaped after the Heart of Jesus, the heart of the one who has called me to follow him along this way that leads to complete happiness, a happiness that fills and floods everything. A heart filled with God, the heart of an authentic shepherd, a generous heart, a heart dedicated solely and exclusively to others, a humble heart, a heart committed to the very end.

Doubtless that the daily celebration of the Eucharist is a true impulse for me to help me in this beautiful, relevant task of making Jesus' command real: "Do this in memory of me": to be a witness of God's love for the young, especially the poorest of them, a person of communion and a zealous pastor of the flock whom God entrusts to me in the equally wonderful task of bringing young people to Jesus.

These are the key to my living as a Salesian priest. "I will give you shepherds after my own heart" marks out who I am and what I do, my life and action. God wants me to deal with young people after his own heart, the heart of the Good Shepherd.

