

Munus docendi, munus liturgicum and munus regendi
in Episcopal ministry

Summary

The “Year for Priests” was supposed to deepen the commitment of all priests to interior renewal for the sake of a stronger and more incisive evidence of the Gospel in today’s world. In fact, it may help this article which presents the triple mission of the Episcopal ministry: *munus docendi*, *munus liturgicum* and *munus regendi*. These three functions (*triplex munus*) and the powers that derive from them express, on the level of action, the pastoral ministry (*munus pastorale*) that every Bishop receives with Episcopal consecration. It is a share in Christ's own love that is given in the consecration; this love is made concrete in the proclamation of the Gospel of hope to all peoples (cf. Lk 4:16–19), in the administration of the sacraments to those who embrace salvation and in the guidance of God's holy people towards eternal life. These three functions are, in fact, deeply interconnected; they explain, influence and clarify one another. For this reason, then, when the Bishop teaches, he also sanctifies and governs the People of God; when he sanctifies, he also teaches and governs; when he governs, he teaches and sanctifies. If a bishop is to represent faithfully the one who sends him, and from whom he derives his identity, his life must be marked by Episcopal holiness: he must personally know the Lord whom he represents. His real fruitful authority is not canonical, but derives from the degree to which the people whom he serves acknowledge that in fact their bishop loves Jesus and loves them.