

Deepening the Call: Reflections on the Diaconate

Deacon Dominic Cerrato, Ph.D.



A Reparative *Diakonia*: Consoling the Hearts of Jesus and Mary

Deacon Dominic Cerrato, Ph.D.

The deacon stands sacramentally at the threshold where the love of Christ meets the wounds of the world. Configured to Christ the Servant, he is ordained not only to perform acts of service but to embody a way of life shaped by self-gift, compassion, and faithful presence. In a culture marked by indifference to God and to the suffering neighbor, the Church proposes reparation as a distinctly evangelical response. For the deacon, reparation is not a private devotion set alongside ministry; it is a way of living *diakonia* as a consoling participation in the love of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

In Catholic theology, reparation is fundamentally relational. Sin is not merely the transgression of a law but a rupture in communion, a wound inflicted upon love itself. Because God has freely bound Himself to humanity through covenant, sin wounds the Heart of God. Reparation arises as love's answer to wounded love. It seeks not to compensate God, but to console Him by restoring communion through fidelity, sacrifice, and self-offering. Reparation thus flows from charity and returns to charity.

This theology of reparation is inseparable from the mystery of Christ's redemptive sacrifice. The Cross is the supreme act of reparative love, wherein Christ offers Himself entirely to the Father on behalf of humanity. While His sacrifice is complete and sufficient, the baptized are invited to participate in it. As Saint Paul teaches, believers are called to share in Christ's sufferings for the sake of His Body (cf. Col 1:24). Reparation is therefore ecclesial and participatory, drawing the Church into Christ's own self-giving love.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary expresses the Church's participation in Christ's redemptive love. The pierced Heart of Christ reveals a love offered without reserve and invites the faithful to console Him through fidelity, presence, and mercy where His love is unreturned. Inseparably united to this mystery, the Immaculate Heart of Mary embodies the Church's perfect response of attentive listening and total surrender, standing faithfully at the foot of the Cross. Marian reparation thus draws the faithful into trust, obedience, and persevering love, uniting human suffering to Christ's saving sacrifice.

For the deacon, these theological realities converge in a **reparative diakonia**. Sacramentally configured to Christ the Servant, his ministry becomes a privileged means of consoling the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, as every act of authentic diaconal service, rooted in prayer and offered in union with Christ, becomes an act of reparation. At the altar, the deacon ministers near the Eucharistic sacrifice, uniting his life to Christ's self-offering; in proclaiming the Gospel, he gives voice to truth in a world wounded by falsehood and despair. Through works of charity and justice, he enters human suffering with reverence, bearing it prayerfully as

intercession and standing with Christ among the poor, the marginalized, and the forgotten, loving where love has been denied.

Reparative *diakonia*, however, requires an interior life capable of sustaining it. Without prayer, Eucharistic devotion, and Marian discipleship, service risks becoming mere activism. Rooted in communion with the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, the deacon's ministry becomes a living consolation, a quiet yet powerful witness that love can heal what sin has wounded.

Deacons, therefore, are exhorted to embrace reparation not as an added devotion but as the very soul of their ministry. By living a reparative *diakonia*, the deacon becomes a sacramental sign of Christ's enduring love, consoling the Hearts of Jesus and Mary by offering his life for the life of the world.

###