



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO THE NEW RECRUITS OF THE PONTIFICAL SWISS GUARD***

Friday, 6 May 2005

*Distinguished Commandant,
Reverend Chaplain,
My Dear Guardsmen,
Dear Parents and Friends of the Pontifical Swiss Guard Corps,*

I address a very cordial greeting to all of you and welcome you to the Pope's house! From the very first hours of my Pontificate, you, the Swiss Guards, have been faithful and available to me. You accompany the Successor of Peter "step by step" and effectively guarantee his protection, so that, free from concern for his own safety, he can carry out his service for the salvation of men and women and the good of peoples.

Dear friends, I am really extraordinarily glad that the traditional swearing-in ceremony of the recruits just a few days after the beginning of my Pontificate gives me an opportunity to address a word of recognition, gratitude and encouragement to you all. At this time you are my guests here in the Apostolic Palace, the most important "place of service" for the Swiss Guard!

I naturally address a special greeting to the recruits who are officially enlisted in the Corps today, and to their parents who have come here to express their desire to accompany their sons with their love and prayers.

Dear parents, you are entrusting your sons and the petitions of your family to the intercession of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, as well as to that of many other saints. Every true pilgrimage brings us closer to God, the destination of our journey. I hope with all my heart that all of you will experience in these days a true deepening of your faith and your closeness to the Successor of Peter, the visible Head of the universal Church. May the liturgical celebrations and many pleasant

encounters help you!

Dear Swiss Guards, the reason for enlisting is very different for each one of you: a taste for adventure, channelled by your wish to do something really different, to the noble desire to serve the Church and the Pope and thereby deepen your faith by coming to Rome. Whatever the reason for your decision, what matters now, here in the Vatican, is to live the spirit of it that can create a true spiritual bond among you.

This spirit of the Swiss Guard is nourished by the glorious, almost five-centuries-old tradition of the life of a small army with great ideals. The ideals that give life to this spirit, without which the Swiss Guard could never be equal to so important a mission, are the following: a sound Catholic faith, a Christian approach to life that is convinced and convincing, unshakeable fidelity and deep love for the Church and for the Vicar of Christ, awareness and perseverance in both the small and important tasks of daily service, courage and humility, empathy and humaneness.

Dear Swiss Guards, the collaboration you offer to the Successor of Peter, Pastor of the universal Church, requires the high professionalism of modern security services, but at the same time has an authentic and significant ecclesial dimension. In the person of the Pope, you serve the whole Church; you make available to her your youthful enthusiasm, vitality and inner freshness. As I look at you, dear friends, I remember what I said during the liturgical celebration for the inauguration of my Pontificate.: "The Church is alive.... And the Church is young. She holds within herself the future of the world and therefore shows each of us the way towards the future" (*L'Osservatore Romano* English edition, 27 April 2005, p. 8).

Dear Guards, you can and must be examples and lively witnesses of this. It will be a way of living the vocation of Christians, committed to reflecting in everyday behaviour, the greatness of the new life received in Baptism.

Dear Swiss Guards! As I entrust you, your families, your friends and all those who have come to Rome for the swearing-in ceremony, to the intercession of Mary, the Holy Virgin and Mother of God, and to your Patron Saints, Martin and Sebastian, as well as to the great patron of your beautiful Homeland that lies at the heart of Europe, Brother Nicholas of Flüe, I wholeheartedly impart my Apostolic Blessing to you all.