



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO THE COMMUNITY OF ROME'S
PONTIFICAL ECCLESIASTICAL ACADEMY****

*Friday, 2 June 2006
Vatican's Consistory Hall*

*Dear President,
Dear Students of the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy,*

I am pleased to meet you today and to address to each one of you and to your entire community my cordial greeting, which I extend in the first place to your President, Archbishop Justo Mullor García. I thank him for kindly interpreting your devout and filial sentiments just now.

Your visit gives me the opportunity to express to you the attention with which I am following your Academy: in it you are preparing with commitment and dedication to exercise in a special way the priestly ministry which service to the Holy See implies.

It is an important service because it aims to extend to the particular Churches and nations of the whole world the witness of the Successor of Peter's concern.

Dear students, to prepare yourselves properly for the mission that awaits you, you are called first of all to be a community of prayer, in which the relationship with God is constant, faithful and intense, and becomes for each one the life-giving sap of his entire existence.

May the Eucharist you celebrate daily be the vital centre, source and root of your every activity in these years and in the future, when you will be exercising your priestly ministry at the service of the Holy See in the different countries.

Indeed, your action will be effective to the extent that you strive to be witnesses of Christ, the Truth

that illumines and directs the peoples on their way. Therefore, make yourselves messengers of his Gospel of love, capable of renewing hearts and making coexistence within every society fully human. Only if you are faithful to your vocation will you be able to render a valid service to the Apostolic See.

Your Academy wishes to continue to be both a school of prayer and a training ground for authentic *human and theological formation*. The pastoral ministry for which you are preparing requires careful training with specific skills. Today, more than ever, a solid education is indispensable. In addition to the necessary theological formation, it must provide a deeper knowledge of the perennial doctrine of the Church and the guidelines of the Holy See's activity at the ecclesial and international levels.

May you treasure the educational opportunities that are offered to you during this period of learning, and continue in the future to update yourselves constantly through a personal and serious commitment to study.

Your Academy now has a 300-year-old history, and following in the wake of its past must continue to be *a place of communion*.

The possibility of living in Rome, where the catholicity of the Church is uniquely experienced, and the fact that you come from different continents is a precious opportunity to foster the spirit of unity and communion.

In the future, you will have the opportunity of coming into contact with peoples whose languages and civilizations differ; you will exercise your priestly ministry in particular Churches that are often culturally different from the ones from which you come.

Consequently, you must be able to understand, love, support and encourage every Christian community in order everywhere to be faithful servants of Peter's charism, which is a charism of unity and coherence for the entire ecclesial company. You are therefore rightly inspired to spend your stay at the Academy in a spirit of true priestly brotherhood, so as to develop the pastoral sense of communion and unity.

Thus, always open the horizons of your mind and heart to the universality of the Church, to overcome every temptation of particularism and individualism.

Lastly, in the course of your formation may you not lack a filial and genuine devotion to the Virgin Mary. May she be the one who helps you to grow in love for Christ and for the Church and always to strive for holiness, the supreme and indispensable aspiration of our Christian and priestly life.

With these sentiments and wishes, I invoke upon you an abundance of the Holy Spirit's gifts, while

I affectionately impart a special Apostolic Blessing to you and to your loved ones.

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