



# The Holy See

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## ***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI TO THE MEMBERS OF THE STS PETER AND PAUL ASSOCIATION***

*Hall of Blessings  
Saturday, 17 June 2006*

*Dear Friends,*

With the Solemnity of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul now close at hand, it is a pleasure for me to meet you, together with your families. Your visit today enables me to renew my gratitude to you for your many years of service to the Successor of Peter. I greet you all with affection, as I thank your President who has kindly interpreted your common sentiments.

Your Sts Peter and Paul Association, which in 1970 inherited the legacy of the Palatine Guard, carries out with dedication a voluntary service to the Holy See. The three practical sections of which it is composed - I am referring to the liturgical, charitable and cultural sections - reflect three complementary aspects of the life and action of the ecclesial community.

In the first place, it is important for you to take care of the liturgy, which, as the Second Vatican Council teaches: "daily builds up those who are in the Church... into a holy temple of the Lord ... to the mature measure of the fullness of Christ. At the same time it marvellously increases their power to preach Christ" (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 2).

May an intense life of prayer and assiduous participation in the liturgy continue to be your priority commitment, as individuals and as a sodality.

Dear friends, only if we let ourselves be constantly formed in listening to the Word of God and nourish ourselves regularly with the Body and Blood of Christ, can we pass on to others the love of God which is a gift of the Holy Spirit. In the Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*, I wanted to recall that love of neighbour, grounded in the love of God, is first and foremost a responsibility for each individual member of the faithful, but it is also a responsibility for the entire ecclesial community at every

level (cf. n. 20).

You seek to witness to this love for the poor at the meals at the "Dono di Maria" House and in the paediatric medical centre of Santa Marta, as well as in the social initiatives promoted in your parishes. May charity motivate all your activities. May the exhortation that the Apostle Paul addressed to the Colossians, "above all these put on love which binds everything together in perfect harmony" (Col 3: 14), be your rule for life.

No less important is the attention you wish to pay to an appropriate cultural formation in order to mature in the faith. Today, evangelization requires a responsible knowledge of modern cultural situations and a constant deepening of sound Catholic teaching. Thus, you do well, dear friends, not to ignore this aspect either, and I encourage you to continue on the rewarding path on which you have already set out.

You came into being to be at the service of the Successor of Peter, and I thank you for the generosity with which you carry out this task. May the Lord make it ever more fruitful and, with the power of his Spirit, may he make you his authentic disciples.

May the Virgin Mary, *Virgo Fidelis*, whose image you venerate in your chapel, protect and accompany you always. I assure you of my prayers and with affection I impart the Apostolic Blessing to you all, willingly extending it to your families and your loved ones.

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