



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO THE PONTIFICAL SWISS GUARD RECRUITS
AND THEIR RELATIVES AT THEIR SWEARING-IN CEREMONY***

*Clementine Hall
Monday, 7 May 2012*

*Mr Commandant,
Mons. Chaplain,
Dear Officials and Members of the Swiss Guard Corps,
Distinguished Guests,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

I would like to extend a cordial greeting to you all. In particular, I welcome the recruits who are accompanied today by your parents, relatives and friends and I likewise welcome the representatives of the Swiss Authorities, who have come here for this happy event.

Dear Guards, you have the privilege to work for a few years in the heart of Christendom and to live in the Eternal City. Your relatives, and all those who have wished to take part in these days of festivity with you have combined attendance at the swearing-in ceremony with a pilgrimage to the Tombs of the Apostles. I hope that here in Rome you may all have the unique experience of the universality of the Church and that you may strengthen and deepen your faith, above all with the moments of prayer and meetings which are a feature of these days.

The duties that the Swiss Guard carries out are a direct service to the Supreme Pontiff and to the Apostolic See. Thus, it is a reason for deep appreciation that young men should choose to devote several years of their life to being entirely at the service of the Successor of Peter and of his co-workers.

Your work is one of indisputable fidelity to the Pope which played a heroic role on the occasion of

the “Sack of Rome” in 1527 when, on 6 May, your predecessors sacrificed their lives. Neither today nor then could the special service of the Swiss Guard be carried out without the distinguishing features of every member of the Corps: firmness in the Catholic faith, fidelity and love for the Church of Jesus Christ, diligence and perseverance in the small and important daily tasks, courage and humility, altruism and availability. Your hearts must be filled with these virtues when you carry out your service of honour and security in the Vatican.

Be supportive of one another in your daily work and for your own edification and preserve the Gospel style of charity in dealing with the people you will meet every day. In Sacred Scripture the appeal for love of one’s neighbour is linked to the commandment to love God with all one’s heart, with all one’s soul, with all one’s strength (cf. Mk 12:29-31). If you are to love your brethren you must draw from the fire of divine charity, by means of prolonged moments of prayer, constant listening to the Word of God and a life that is totally focused on the mystery of the Eucharist.

The secret of the effectiveness of your work here in the Vatican, as well as of your own projects is consequently the constant reference to Christ. This is the witness borne by a number of your predecessors who not only distinguished themselves in their work but also in their commitment to Christian life. Some of them have been called to follow the Lord on the path of the priesthood or of the consecrated life, and have responded promptly and enthusiastically. Others, however, have happily crowned their vocation to married life through the sacrament of marriage. I thank God, the source of all good, for the different gifts and for the various missions that he entrusts to you, and I also pray for you who are entering the service that you may respond fully to the call of Christ by following him with faithful generosity.

Dear friends, make the most of the time you spend here in Rome to grow in friendship with Christ, to love his Church ever more and to walk toward the goal of every true Christian life: holiness.

May the Virgin Mary — whom we honour in a special way during the month of May — help you to experience more and more every day that profound communion with God which, for us believers, begins on earth and finds fulfillment in Heaven. Indeed we are called, as St Paul recalls, to be “fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God” (Eph 2:19). With these sentiments, I assure you of my constant remembrance in prayer and I warmly impart the Apostolic Blessing upon each one of you.