



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF JOHN PAUL II
TO CARDINAL SWIATEK FOR THE OPENING
OF THE INTERDIOCESAN MAJOR SEMINARY OF PINSK**

*To my venerable Brother,
Cardinal Kazimierz Swiatek
Archbishop of Minsk-Mohilev*

With deep pleasure I learned that the inauguration of the Interdiocesan Major Seminary of Pinsk is now near. I congratulate you, venerable brother, for your fatherly concern in promoting this work, and I praise the entire Church community in Belarus, as I think of the service that the renovated structure can offer to the formation of candidates for the priesthood, as well as an effective programme to promote vocations.

This building, newly renovated, recalls significant episodes of history lived by the Church in Belarus. It was once the seminary of the Servant of God Zygmunt Łozinski, the unforgettable pastor of the flock of Christ in your country during the difficult years of the last century. The Communist regime seized the building and used it for other purposes. Restored to its original aim and appropriately named after the universal patron of theological studies, St Thomas Aquinas, it is now to open to serve the dioceses of Minsk-Mohilev, Pinsk and Vitebsk.

How can we not see a promising sign for the future of the Church in this region in seeing this seminary flourish again? Indeed, the care of priestly vocations is an apostolic work *par excellence* that looks to the future, to the "harvest" which "is plentiful" (Mt 9,37) and which calls for zealous and well-prepared workers. Therefore, care of those aspiring to the priesthood is important: first of all, it calls for an insistent and trusting prayer to the "Lord of the harvest", "to send out labourers into his harvest" (Mt 9,38), and also requires a patient and discerning educational activity, which will accompany and sustain in his human and Christian growth those who are called.

Your Eminence, you know well how the concern for serious formation of the future ministers of the

altar is very close to my heart. The pastoral service of gifted and zealous priests guarantees a steady development of Christian communities. That is why we must not ever grow weary of praying for this intention. I cordially hope that the Interdiocesan Major Seminary of Pinsk may become, most of all, a house of unceasing prayer for vocations and for priests. May the Blessed Virgin Mary watch over your seminary, so that it can appropriately form those who will spend important years of their life there and become a source of many and holy priests.

Moreover, I express my heartfelt appreciation to all who, in various ways, have collaborated in such an important ecclesial work, which will bear great benefits for the entire Catholic population of the region. May God reward everyone.

With these sentiments, I cordially impart to you and your collaborators a special Apostolic Blessing, which I gladly extend to the diocesan community and, in a special way, to those preparing for the priesthood.

From Castel Gandolfo 25 July 2001

JOHN PAUL II