



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE GRADUATE STUDENTS
OF THE ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE OF BOSSEY**

*Consistory Hall
Thursday, 13 February 1992*

Dear Friends from the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you" (Rom.16:20). It is a pleasure to receive you here today during your pilgrimage to Rome, for which I have been happy to offer you hospitality through the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. During the last four months you have lived in an ecumenical community with people from different nationalities and cultures. In the course of the fortieth session of the Graduate School, your professors have guided you to reflect on the theme "Towards New Models of Communities". For Christians the *supreme model of community is the Holy Trinity*, the mystery of Three Divine Persons in a perfect communion of love. Every word and deed of Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God, was a revelation of the inner life which he shares with the Father and the Holy Spirit. In the Gospel of Saint John, for example, we hear him speak of his deep communion of life with the Father in these words: "The Father is in me and I am in the Father" (Jn.10:38 and 14:10,12). The same Evangelist has preserved for us these words of Christ about the unity of the Son and the Father with the Holy Spirit: "whatever (the Spirit) hears he will speak.... He will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore, I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you" (*Ibid.* 16:13-15). In the plan of salvation God willed to reconcile mankind to himself by making it possible for us to participate in this mystery of divine communion through his Son. Our incorporation into the life of the Trinity was the prayer of his heart as he faced the hour of his death: "That they may all be one", he prayed, "even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us..." (*Ibid.* 17:21). Saint Cyprian summarized this relationship between the community of Christ's disciples and the communion of the Three Divine Persons in his description of the Church as "a people made one with the unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit" (St. Cyprian, *De Orat. Dom.*, 23 in *Lumen Gentium*, 4). The People of God, made one by sharing in the divine unity, is, as the Second Vatican Council says, "a

sacrament or sign and an instrument of intimate union with God and of the unity of all humanity" (*Lumen Gentium*, 1). The world today, torn as it is by strife and mistrust, has a particular *need for all believers* to bear clear witness to this unity and to be God's instruments of reconciliation. By living in harmony with one another (Cf. Col. 3:13), in mutual love and respect, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, they, in the words of *the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, serve "as a leaven and a sort of soul of human society, which is to be renewed in Christ and transformed into God's family" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 40). Dear friends in Christ, as you return to your respective countries at the end of your course at Bossey, I pray that you will have renewed strength to help the communities to which you belong to accomplish the deeds of love which reveal to the world the mystery of the Triune God. May the Lord Almighty bless you!

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