



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF PAUL VI
TO THE PRIESTS OF THE INSTITUT FOR
CONTINUING THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION**

Saturday, 11 December 1971

We are very pleased to welcome the priests who have been participating in the Institute for Continuing Theological Education at the North American College. We are confident that your time in Rome has enabled you to renew and deepen the grace which God bestowed upon you in the laying on of hands (Cfr. *2 Tim.* 1, 6).

You know well how much the faithful today desire greater knowledge of the Christian teaching. They have so many questions that trouble them. It is the noble task of the priest to offer them the doctrine of the Church in its authentic form, but presented in a manner suitable to the mentality and concerns of our times (Cfr. Discourse of Pope John XXIII at the Solemn Opening of the Second Vatican Council). Thus you have done well by turning to scriptural and theological studies in order to find the best ways to bring to your people a profound and true understanding of the faith which they profess. Your willingness to spend three months in intense learning and reflection is a wonderful sign of your zeal and desire to offer to others as effectively as possible the doctrinal riches of the Church.

But we must never forget who is the center of all our preaching: it is always Christ whom we must proclaim. It is his Gospel that we must bring to our listeners—a Gospel of joy, because it saves; a Gospel of sacrifice, because it demands total self-giving; a Gospel of love, because it announces the infinite mercy of our heavenly Father. It is Our prayer that you return to your people strengthened in that joy, in that self-giving, in that love, so that you will, through the grace of our Lord, be increasingly effective witnesses to his Gospel and ministers of his life to his brothers and sisters.

We express Our appreciation and gratitude to Bishop Hickey, to Father Mahowald and to all who

have made this Institute possible. We assure you of Our prayers and We impart to you Our paternal Apostolic Blessing.

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