



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF PAUL VI
TO A GROUP OF AMERICAN PRIESTS
ON THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THEIR ORDINATION**

Thursday, 5 October 1972

It is a great pleasure for us today to greet the group of priests who are celebrating forty years in the priesthood.

We can easily understand what memories this occasion has for you and what significance you attach to such an anniversary as this. We wish to tell you in very simple words that we are especially close to you at this time; we willingly associate ourselves with you as you render your thanksgiving to the Father through Jesus Christ the High Priest.

We know that you have lived these years with faith and love and that your lives have been an oblation of singlehearted service to the Lord and to his brethren; we know that this oblation has had great value and efficacy because it has been united with Christ's sacrifice of love.

Despite human limitations you have been able to bring a salvific message to God's people and you have been able to minister to their needs, bringing to them the strength and joy of the Gospel.

It is our intention today to express our gratitude for what you and so many of your brother priests throughout the world have done, working as God's humble ministers and acting through the power of his grace. But even more, it is our intention to confirm you in your act of faith and in your fidelity to the ministry of love which you have shared all these years with Jesus Christ, who is "the same yesterday, today, and forever" (*Hebr. 13, 8*). We likewise encourage you to go forward tirelessly in your mission of serving the community and bringing to it the uplifting and transforming love and justice of the Lord.

We pray for each of you to have deep joy in Christ Jesus. "May he strengthen your hearts, making

them blameless and holy before our God” (1 *Thess.* 3, 13). And may he give you his peace in abundance.