



The Holy See

**LETTER OF THE HOLY FATHER
JOHN PAUL II
TO ARCHBISHOP ANTE JURIC
ON THE CELEBRATION OF THE THIRD CENTENARY
OF THE MINOR SEMINARY OF SPLIT**

*To my Venerable Brother The Most Reverend Ante Juric
Archbishop of Split-Makarska*

The celebration of the third centenary of the minor seminary of Split and its high school prompts deep gratitude and praise to the Holy Trinity for the numerous and abundant fruits which it has borne throughout its existence and fills us with joy at the new prospects of its growth and further development for the benefit of the Church and the entire civil society in the region.

The worthy institute, founded according to the directives of the Council of Trent and solemnly opened on 25 March 1700, also unites the spiritual and cultural patrimony of the Glagolitic seminary at Priko in Omis, founded and opened next to the ancient Croatian Church of St Peter in 1750. It has had an irreplaceable role in the formation of the local clergy and lay faithful over the last three centuries and its high school has educated numerous people who have distinguished themselves in the life and work of the Church and in the social and cultural life of the country. It is my sincere wish that this activity may continue to develop in the wake of past experience, for the good of the Church and the civil community in beloved Croatia.

May its third centenary, which is being celebrated during the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, be a fitting opportunity to give a new impetus to the continual care of priestly vocations at the parish and diocesan levels. A new quality of human and spiritual formation for the future pastors of the People of God is in fact necessary so that they can face the old and new challenges that the Church encounters on her way. The rich legacy that the minor seminary of Split has inherited from the past offers a solid basis and is a source of inspiration for future projects.

How could we not remember the heroic testimony of fidelity to the Church given by the Bishop, the superiors, the professors and the seminarians at various times in this century now ending, especially in 1956 when the minor seminary, together with the major seminary, was forced to interrupt its activity by those who tried to destroy the Catholic Church in Croatia? How can we fail to admire the enthusiasm and great sacrifices that accompanied the life of the seminarians and their superiors after the reopening in 1963?

With the establishment of freedom and democracy in Croatia in 1990, new, vast fields of evangelical service and pastoral activity are now open to the Church. In order to meet the just expectations and needs of the Church and civil society, it is particularly necessary that the minor seminary of Split become more and more a place where young people can find a family environment, filled with faith, so that they can reflect on their vocation more clearly and develop the necessary spiritual, human and intellectual abilities.

May the Virgin of Nazareth, who promptly responded to the call of the Archangel Gabriel and opened the way to the fulfilment of God's plan of salvation, be an example for everyone in this difficult task. As I entrust the minor seminary of Split to her constant maternal protection, I sincerely impart my Apostolic Blessing to Your Excellency, to the superiors, professors, support staff, seminarians and the high school students, as well as to all who have helped with the rebuilding and to all who will attend the celebrations that have been planned.

From the Vatican, 20 March 2000, Solemnity of St Joseph, husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary, patron of the Universal Church and Croatia.

IOANNES PAULUS PP. II

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