



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO IRELAND

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II TO THE SEMINARIANS

*Chapel of St Patrick's College, Maynooth
Monday, 1st October 1979*

Dear brothers and sons in our Lord Jesus Christ,

You have a very special place in my heart and in the heart of the Church. During my visit to Maynooth I wanted to be alone with you, even though it could be for only a few moments.

I have many things that I would tell you—things that I have been saying about the life of seminarians and about seminaries all during the first year of my pontificate.

In particular I would like to speak again about the word of God: about how you are called to hear and guard and do the word of God. And about how you are to base your entire lives and ministry upon the word of God, just as it is transmitted by the Church, just as it is expounded by the Magisterium, just as it has been understood throughout the history of the Church by the faithful guided by the Holy Spirit : *semper et ubique et ab omnibus*. The word of God is the great treasure of your lives. Through the word of God you will come to a deep knowledge of the mystery of Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of Mary ; Jesus Christ, the High Priest of the New Testament and the Saviour of the world.

The word of God is worthy of all your efforts. To embrace it in its purity and integrity, and to spread it by word and example is a great mission. And this is your mission, today and tomorrow and for the rest of your lives.

As you pursue your vocation—a vocation so intimately related to the word of God—I wish to recall

to you one simple but important lesson taken from the life of Saint Patrick ; and it is this : In the history of evangelization, the destiny of an entire people—your people—was radically affected for time and eternity because of the fidelity with which Saint Patrick embraced and proclaimed the word of God, and by reason of the fidelity with which Saint Patrick pursued his call to the end.

What I really want you to realize is this : that God counts on you that he makes his plans, in a way, depend on your free collaboration, on the oblation of your lives, and on the generosity with which you follow the inspirations of the Holy Spirit in the depths of your hearts.

The Catholic faith of Ireland today was linked, in God's plan, to the fidelity of Saint Patrick. And tomorrow? Yes, tomorrow some part of God's plan will be linked to your fidelity—to the fervour with which you say *yes* to God's word in your lives.

Today Jesus Christ is making this appeal to you through me: the appeal for fidelity. In prayer you will see more and more every day what I mean and what the implications of this call are. By God's grace you will understand more and more every day how God requires and accepts your fidelity as a condition for the supernatural effectiveness of all your activity. The supreme expression of fidelity will come with your irrevocable and total self-giving in union with Jesus Christ to his Father. And may our Blessed Mother Mary help you to make this gift acceptable.

Remember Saint Patrick. Remember what the fidelity of just one man has meant for Ireland and the world. Yes, dear sons and brothers, fidelity to Jesus Christ and to his word makes all the difference in the world. Let us therefore look up to Jesus, who is for all time the Faithful Witness of the Father.

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