



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO THE COMMUNITY
OF THE PONTIFICAL NORTH AMERICAN COLLEGE**

Saturday, 16 April 1983

Dear brothers in our Lord Jesus Christ,

It is a great joy for me to welcome you here today, so soon after your ordination to the Diaconate. You have entered into a new phase in your relationship with Christ, one that has marked you for special service among the People of God.

Yours is a *ministry of love* that manifests itself in an intense commitment to the word of God and to the practice of charity, just like Stephen and the others who were chosen by the Apostles in the early Christian community.

Although your time as deacons aims at preparing you for more extensive ecclesial service as Priests of Jesus Christ, I ask you, nonetheless, to accept generously the call which the Lord has given you. You are *ministers of the word*: Let the word of God speak to your hearts; let it be the source of your communion with Christ; let it guide your every action. Then you will know the happiness that Saint Paul speaks of when he says, "For me, to live is Christ".

I also welcome those who accompany you: Your parents, relatives, friends and teachers - all those who through their love, support and encouragement have brought to this moment and who sustain you with their prayers.

I ask the Risen Savior to confirm you in his grace so that you may proclaim the Gospel message with joy and hope.

God bless you all.

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