



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO A GROUP OF PRIESTS FROM THE UNITED STATES
ON THE OCCASION OF THE FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY
OF THEIR PRIESTLY ORDINATION**

Thursday, 10 October 1991

*Dear Brother Bishops,
Dear Brother Priests,*

With joy and affection I greet you, *alumni of the Pontifical North American College* who are celebrating the *fortieth anniversary of your ordination* to the Priesthood. You are vividly aware of the many blessings with which Almighty God has filled your lives and the lives of those whom he has entrusted to your pastoral care over the years. One with you in praising and thanking him for the riches of his love, I join you likewise in prayerful remembrance of classmates and friends who are not able to be here.

I am glad that you have chosen to commemorate this milestone in your lives by returning to Rome. Once again *you are pilgrims in this City*, the scene of the splendid witness to Christ given by the Apostles Peter and Paul and by so many other martyrs and saints. The bonds which link you to the Church in Rome are just as strong after all these years, and you testify to the fact that the hopes placed in you by the superiors of your College - and here I recall by name your Rector, Archbishop Martin O'Connor - were not in vain. The re-opening of the College was no easy task after the Second World War, so by persevering labor in the pastoral ministry over these forty years you have repaid the confidence placed in you by those who sent you to study in Rome.

The mission for which you were ordained continues to shape your lives, and there remains much for you to do in preaching the word of God, in nourishing the family of Christ's disciples with the Eucharist and the other sacraments of faith, and in defending the dignity of the human person and of human life. May the Holy Spirit renew the joy of your youth and your first fervor for the service of the Gospel. Let this anniversary be an occasion to rekindle the gift of God that is within you

through the laying on of hands (cf. 2 Tim. 1:6).

I commend you and the people you serve to the loving intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Patroness of your College as Our Lady of Humility, and I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing.

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