



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE COMMUNITY
OF THE "PONTIFICIO COLLEGIO FILIPPINO" IN ROME**

June 2, 2001

Dear Filipino Friends,

On the happy occasion of the Fortieth Anniversary of the foundation of the *Pontificio Collegio Filippino*, I join you in thanking God for all that the College has represented for the Church in the Philippines and the Filipino community in Rome since its solemn inauguration on October 7, 1961, by my predecessor, Blessed Pope John XXIII.

My visits to your country have enabled me to experience at first hand the warm hospitality and lively faith of your people. These are the people that you, the young priests of the College, are preparing to serve. You know that you are often in their thoughts and prayers, and that they expect much of you. They expect you to be *priests after the heart of Jesus*.

I invite you to develop a deep and authentic Eucharistic spirituality, and to let yourselves be formed according to the model of Christ, the Good Shepherd, who laid down his life for his flock (cf. *Jn* 10:11). Learn to love the Sacrament of Penance, so that as confessors you may make known to the faithful the compassionate heart of God who reconciles us to himself. Be men of prayer, charity and zeal.

Study is also an essential dimension of the priest's entire life. He shares in the prophetic mission of Christ, and he is called to reveal to others, in Jesus Christ, the true face of God and, as a result, the true face of man. Through your commitment to study you will be prepared to carry out the ministry of the word, proclaiming the mystery of salvation clearly and without ambiguity, distinguishing it from mere human opinion. Always see your intellectual work as *a service to the People of God*, helping them to give an account, to all who ask, of their Christian hope (cf. *1 Pt*

3:15).

I pray that the *Pontificio Collegio Filippino* will continue to fulfil its mission to form priests imbued with love of God and zeal for spreading the Gospel. Entrusting you and your families to the intercession of your Patroness, *Nuestra Señora de la Paz y Buen Viaje*, I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing.

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