



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI
AT THE END OF THE COURSE IN THE INSTITUTE
FOR CONTINUING THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION***

Monday, 21 May 1973

Dear brothers and sons in Jesus Christ,

We know that you are coming to the end of your course in the Institute for Continuing Theological Education, and it is with joy that we respond to your desire to have an audience with us. We know that these months spent in Rome have offered an occasion of grace for all of you. You have been able to draw closer to Jesus Christ and understand better your own ministry of service, which is a sharing in his glorious and eternal priesthood.

We believe that the function of this Institute is wise and providential. In the first place, it can bring back to you so many basic truths that you once studied and perhaps forgot: aspects of God's Word ever relevant for your own lives and the lives of those to whom you minister.

The function of the Institute is likewise to help you to examine more deeply the truths of faith. You are well aware that these truths are fixed in their dogmatic formulation, but they are inexhaustible in their content and their study (Cfr. *DS* 3016). Christ invites us constantly to meditate on his salvific message, and his Church has given you the opportunity to pursue this goal wholeheartedly for three months. This privilege brings with it a great challenge to each of you. For this reason we repeat the exhortation of Saint Paul: "Let us, then, be children no longer, tossed here and there, carried about by every wind of doctrine . . . Rather, let us profess the truth in love and grow to the full maturity of Christ the head" (*Eph.* 4, 14-15). And in another letter Saint Paul continues to encourage us: "Brothers, I do not think of myself as having reached the finish line. I give no thought to what lies behind but push on to what is ahead . . . It is important that we continue on our course, no matter what stage we have reached" (*Phil.* 3, 13).

There is yet another purpose of your Institute: it is to help you to respond to the urgent questions of the modern world. You recall that *Gaudium et Spes* enumerated “marriage and the family, human culture, life in its economic, social and political dimensions, the bonds between the family of nations, and peace” among the many subjects arousing universal concern today (*Loc. cit.* 46). And the same document expresses the hope that on each of these topics there may shine the radiant ideals proclaimed by Christ. It is our hope that you and your Institute will contribute greatly to this lofty goal.

Dear brothers and sons, our prayers and affection accompany you as you return to your people, even more mature in your responsibility to them and to all Christ’s Church. And may you be sustained and strengthened in your faith and love by our Apostolic Blessing.