



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI
ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF ORDINATION
OF A GROUP OF PRIESTS FROM CHICAGO**

Friday, 18 June 1976

Venerable Brother and dear sons and daughters,

It is a joy for us to welcome you today. We see before us a representation of the entire Church in Chicago, for which we have great paternal affection and pastoral love. We know that your presence is occasioned by the observance in Rome of the anniversary of ordination of a number of priests of the Archdiocese. We are happy to address our special words to them.

Beloved sons: for some of you it is twenty-five years, for others forty years, that you have been sharing in the ministerial priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ. And now you have come to Rome to celebrate at the tomb of the Apostle Peter your fraternity in Christ and in his priesthood, and to reflect with us on the mission that is yours.

As co-workers with your Bishop, your first task is to proclaim the Gospel of God (Cfr. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 4). You have been sent to announce the death and Resurrection of the Lord. And because this proclamation is eminently and inseparably joined to the very offering whereby Christ ratified the New Testament in his blood, you fulfill your chief duty in the mystery of the Eucharistic Sacrifice (Cfr. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 13).

It is in the Eucharist that the work of redemptive love is continually carried out. It is by means of the Eucharist—source and center of the Church's unity—that we are able to gather God's family together in love. It is in the Eucharist that we fulfill Christ's command to live on in his love (Cfr. *Io.* 15, 9), and from the Eucharist that we derive that pastoral love required of those who share in the work of the Good Shepherd.

Some days ago we told a group of newly-ordained American priests that the measure of their effectiveness and the measure of their joy in the priesthood would be determined by the measure of their love (Cfr. Discorso de1 9 giugno 1976). And today we repeat the same conviction to you, praying that each of you will experience a renewal in love-Eucharistic love, pastoral love, fraternal love, effective love. With Saint John we say: "Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God" (1 *Io.* 4, 7).

And with this witness of love in deed and in truth, we ask you to go forward together, united in your priestly ministry, faithful in love, faithful forever-for the glory of the Father, through Christ and in the Holy Spirit. May the zeal and enthusiasm engendered in you by your priestly love attract young men to Christ and to his priesthood, and help them to open up their hearts to his divine call. To you and to them we attest in the name of the Lord and in his words : "There is no greater love than this: to lay down one's life ..." (*Io.* 15, 13).

Invoking upon all of you the Spirit of God's love, we impart to you and to your brother priests at home, as well as to the entire Archdiocese of Chicago, our special Apostolic Blessing.