



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

TO THE RECRUITS OF THE PONTIFICAL SWISS GUARD *Monday, 7 May 1979 Brothers and Sisters,* As

for my revered predecessors, for me, too, the solemn swearing in of new Guards is a welcome opportunity for a first familiar meeting with them, with members of their families, and with representatives of the Old Guards Association. So I bid a hearty welcome to you all, particularly to the recruits who have just been sworn in, to their parents and brothers and sisters; and I congratulate the Commanding Officer and the whole Swiss Guard on their new members. The years which you, dear young friends, pass in the service of the Pontifical Guard, are years which you give to the Church. The undertaking of this service is for each one of you at the same time a personal profession of faith in the Church and in Christ in the person and mission of his visible representative, the Pope, for whose protection and defence in the course of history Guards have already even laid down their lives. The day of your swearing-in, 6 May, is also dedicated to reverent and grateful remembrance of them. Christ teaches us, as I recently stressed in my Encyclical "[Redemptor Hominis](#)", "that the best use of freedom is charity, which takes concrete form in self-giving and in service" (n. 21). Love and self-giving should also determine your future service as Guards. The faithfulness, to which you have committed yourselves through the oath, concerns in the first place conscientious performance of the tasks and duties you have nobly undertaken. Ultimately, however, your promise of faithfulness to Christ himself, who lays upon us in following him the responsibility of demanding from ourselves, and of doing precisely, that which corresponds to our respective vocation. May your love for Christ and for the Church fully develop and grow in depth in your service in the Swiss Guard. Faithfulness in the many little daily duties will make you capable also of carrying out your great personal life task according to God's will with the same dedication and reliability as a responsible and staunch Christian. For, as Christ assures us, "He who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much" (Lk 16:10). May God help you in this with his enlightening and strengthening assistance of grace and with the Apostolic Blessing which I willingly impart to you, dear Guards, and to your dear ones. For this first meeting with young recruits of the Swiss Guards, now bound to the person of the Pope by the oath taken yesterday, I wish to add a few words in French. I wish to tell you, dear Sons—and this expression "Son" expresses all my affection—how happy I am to be able henceforth really to rely on you. You have the task of watching over the Holy Father: well, the Holy Father tranquilly trusts to you! He thanks you for dedicating to him some years of your lives, and he promises your parents present here to look after you. I am grateful to you for contributing to create, around me and my collaborators, an atmosphere which, while maintaining the necessary order, makes it possible to receive visitors in a way that is at once simple, agreeable, and dignified. You are the heirs to a great tradition of faithfulness to the Church and to the Holy See. That was a point of honour for those who preceded you. I hope that it will be the same for you and that you will be fully happy and proud to do so. To each of you and to your families, my fatherly Blessing and my very cordial wishes. © Copyright 1979 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

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