



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE STUDENTS
OF THE PONTIFICAL NORTH AMERICAN COLLEGE**

Saturday, 18 December 1993

Dear Friends in Christ,

I am pleased to greet *the students of the Pontifical North American College about to be ordained deacons*. My warm welcome also goes to your families and friends who have supported you with their prayers during your preparation and who now join you for your ordination. To the Rector and Faculty of the College I express my gratitude for the help they have given you in answering the Lord's call "to serve the People of God in the ministry of the Liturgy, of the word, and of charity" (*Lumen Gentium*, 29).

By the grace of ordination to the diaconate, you will be spiritually conformed to Jesus Christ, the obedient servant of the Father, who did not hesitate to lay down his life (Cf. Jn. 15: 13) for our Redemption. *Strive always to make the image of Christ the Servant shine forth in every aspect of your life and ministry!* As deacons you will preach the Gospel, assist the priest at the altar of Christ's Sacrifice, administer the Sacraments of Baptism and Marriage, instruct the faithful and carry out works of charity in the name of the Church. Never forget that the ultimate fruitfulness of this ministry will flow from your constant union with the Lord, sustained by prayer and reverent contemplation of the mysteries of grace which you proclaim and celebrate.

Your lives must be deeply inspired and directed by that pastoral charity which is a sharing in the sacrificial love flowing from the heart of the Crucified and Risen Christ. Following the example of the Lord himself (Cf. Eph. 5: 25), you are called to give yourselves completely to the Church, the beloved Bride of Christ (Cf. John Paul, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 23), and to show generous concern for the least of your brothers and sisters. Your lives of celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom will bear powerful witness to your unflinching hope in the power of Christ's grace and your firm trust in

the fulfilment of his promises.

Dear brothers in Christ, I commend you and your families to the loving intercession of Mary Immaculate, Patroness of your country and of your College. To all of you I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing.

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