



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI
TO PRIESTS AND SEMINARIANS OF THE
NORTH AMERICAN COLLEGE**

Saturday, 5 February 1977

Dear sons in Jesus Christ,

We are especially happy to have you with us today, for this audience comes shortly after the conclusion of the Bicentennial celebration of your country. It is our hope that this event will succeed in marking a fresh spiritual beginning, a new period in your lives and in the lives of all Americans. For you in particular, priests and seminarians, we pray that this renewal will be deeply supernatural.

Seven years ago this month, we made a visit to your College. Today we see all new faces, but the ideal of the North American College is and must be the same: to furnish an effective preparation for the priestly ministry, a preparation based on an intimate knowledge of Jesus Christ.

On the occasion of our visit we spoke about the need to know Jesus, and today we repeat this exhortation to you. For with Saint Paul we are deeply convinced that Christ is “the power of God and the wisdom of God” and that the Father has made him “our wisdom and also our justice, our sanctification and our redemption” (1 *Cor.* 1, 24. 30).

In the knowledge of Jesus we have indeed the key to his Gospel, and we begin to understand his brethren and to have a true insight into the needs of the world. Through a knowledge of Jesus, we see the limitations of human wisdom and come to experience the power of God, whereby we appraise “spiritual things in spiritual terms” (1 *Cor.* 2, 13), attributing a primacy to the Message of the Cross. And an intimate knowledge of Jesus will enable us to give meaningful witness to all who turn to us, saying: “We want to see Jesus” (*Io.* 12, 21). In this way our preaching and our testimony will have, not the persuasive force of human wisdom, but the power of the Spirit.

Dear sons, we invoke upon you and all your brother priests and seminarians in America this great grace, this great gift of the Father: to know Jesus and to find joy and strength in his love. And to all of you, with paternal affection in the Lord, we impart our Apostolic Blessing.