



# The Holy See

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## ***ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI TO THE STUDENTS OF THE PONTIFICAL SCOTS COLLEGE***

*Saturday, 4 March 1978*

*Dear sons in Christ,*

We have just come from the “ad limina” visit of your Bishops to us, and in their persons we have embraced in the unity and love of Christ the entire Church in Scotland. And now on this solemn occasion we wish to share our thoughts with all of you—the students of the Pontifical Scots College—and through you to send our message to all your fellow seminarians at home and at Valladolid.

First of all, we want you to know of our paternal love for you in Jesus Christ. In you we see a sign of the Church’s vitality, a proof that the Lord’s grace is active and victorious in this age as in every age. By the acceptance of Christ’s call, you are giving witness to the primacy of the supernatural. By generously committing your lives totally to Jesus Christ and to his Church, you are professing your faith in the power of the death and Resurrection of the Lord and of his Coming again in glory.

Indeed, your whole life in the priesthood will be directed to proclaiming the Paschal Mystery; your activities will reach their fulfilment and perfection in your sacramental ministry, through which the Christian people meet their Saviour and are drawn effectively into communion with the Father and the Holy Spirit. The very purpose of your vocation is to perpetuate the mediation of Christ the Priest.

And so, for you life will have no meaning apart from Christ. Like the Apostles, you must be his companions and his friends. In him you will discover “the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor. 1, 24). In knowing the Lord Jesus you will really come to understand his brethren and to gain true insights into the needs of the world. From an intimate knowledge of Jesus Christ you will receive the inner conviction and energy necessary to make an impact on the world.

For if you are looking for the key to the Gospels, for the secret of apostolic zeal, for the strength

and vigour required to proclaim the Gospel of salvation and to persevere in the service of humanity, you will find them all in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Never forget the impact of Saint Paul-his contribution to the Church; never forget his words: "For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (*Ibid.* 2, 2).

In order, however, to deepen ever more your knowledge of Christ, you must pray. You must enter into the prayer life of the Church, and unite yourselves with the Sacrifice of Christ, adopting his attitude of loving obedience to his Father. Discipline, therefore, must also be part of your life—a discipline that sustains constant effort, abnegation, self-sacrifice. As young men called to intimate friendship with Christ, you must know that there is no substitute for the cross. Remember, then: prayer and discipline.

And as you explore and live the mystery of Christ, you must likewise, in the words of the Second Vatican Council, "be penetrated with the mystery of the Church"? (*Optatam Totius*, 9) Christ is your example, and with him you must love the Church and give yourself up in sacrifice for her. For you, fidelity to Christ will always demand fidelity to the Church—fidelity to her unity and to the message of salvation that she announces "not in plausible word of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God" (*Cor.* 2, 4-5). Yes, the message that we preach is the seeming folly of the Cross, and it completely supersedes human wisdom. It is to this message, as proclaimed by the Church, that we owe complete fidelity.

Fidelity is the virtue of our times, and it is to fidelity that we exhort you today: in particular, fidelity to the Church's Magisterium. We confirm this exhortation in the presence of your Bishops and before the entire Church of God. In following the authentic Magisterium of the Roman Pontiff and the Bishops in union with him, and in leading the people in this path of truth, you will not be deceived.

And if some day you are tempted to be moved by the claims of superior human wisdom against the real teaching of the Church, then reflect again on this fact that your faith rests on the wisdom and power of God: on Christ himself, who has promised the special assistance of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles and their successors, and who has solemnly said to his disciples: "He who hears you hears me, and he who rejects you rejects me..." (*Luc.* 10, 16).

Yes, dear sons, those who accept Christ's assurance will not be disappointed. The divine plan does not change. God's word is not emptied of its meaning. In brief: "God is not mocked" (*Gal.* 6, 7). Why do we tell you these things? So that you may be strong in faith; so that your pastoral charity may be complete; so that your joy may be full. So that you and all those to whom you will minister "may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ" (*1 Jo.* 1, 3).

In the name of Jesus we bless you.

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