



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI TO THE STAFF OF THE SECRETARIAT OF STATE

Saturday, 21 May 2005

*Your Eminence,
Your Excellencies,
Dear Collaborators,*

I have come without a written text, but in my heart there are sentiments of gratitude together with the willingness to learn.

Little by little I am learning something about the structure of the Secretariat of State and especially about the bulk of documentation that comes in and of work that is carried out daily in this Secretariat of State. In this way I am able to see from the variety, the volume and also by the experience that is hidden behind all this work, how much is done here in these offices.

Even if we cannot normally live the "life of angels" - referring to the words of Cardinal Sodano, Secretary of State - but rather, the life of "fish", of human beings, it is precisely in this way that we do our duty.

If one considers large international administrations - the European administration, for example, of which Archbishop Lajolo gave me the number of employees - we are actually far fewer in number. And the fact that such a small number of people carry out so much important work for the universal Church does the Holy See great credit.

This immense work done by a reduced number of people shows the diligence and dedication that goes into the work. Together with the skill and professionalism of the work done here, another characteristic aspect can be added, a particularly professional feature: love for Christ, for the Church and for souls plays a part in our professionalism.

We do not work - as many say of the work - to defend a power. We do not have a worldly, secular power. We do not work for prestige, nor do we work to expand a business or the like.

In reality, we work so that the pathways of the world are opened to Christ.

The purpose of all of our work, with all of its ramifications, is actually ultimately so that his Gospel - as well as the joy of Redemption - may reach the world. In this sense, even in the little duties of each day that appear to lack lustre, we do, as Cardinal Sodano said, the best we can to cooperate with the Truth, that is, with Christ in his working in the world, so that the world truly becomes the Kingdom of God.

And so, I can only say a great "thank you". Together we carry out the service characteristic of the Successor of Peter, the "Petrine service": confirming our brothers and sisters in the faith.

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