



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO MEMBERS OF THE COLLEGE OF CARDINALS,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 60th ANNIVERSARY
OF HIS PRIESTLY ORDINATION***

Hall of Dukes, Apostolic Palace

Friday, 1st July 2011

Dear Confreres,

“Ecce quam bonum et quam iucundum habitare fratres in unum” (Ps 133[132]:1). At this moment, I feel I am really experiencing these words of the Psalm. We see how lovely it is when brothers are together and together live the joy of priesthood, of being called to the Lord's vineyard.

I would like to say “thank you” with all my heart to you, Cardinal Dean, for your beautiful, moving and comforting words, and also especially for the gift you have offered me, thus our “being together” may be extended to the poor of Rome.

It is not only we who are eating, here with us are those poor people who are in need of our help, of our support, of our love, which is fulfilled in practice through the possibility of eating, of living well. Since we can and want to work in this regard, an important sign for me is that at this solemn hour we are not alone; with us are the poor of Rome who are especially loved by the Lord.

Fratres in unum: the experience of brotherhood is a real situation inherent in the priesthood, for one is never ordained alone but inserted into a presbyterate, or as bishops into the Episcopal College. Thus the “we” of the Church is accompanied and expressed at this time which is a moment of gratitude for the Lord's guidance, for all that he has given and forgiven me in these years, but also a moment of remembrance.

In 1951 the world was totally different: there was no television, there was no Internet, and no

computer, there were no mobile phones. The world we come from truly seems “prehistoric”. In the first place our cities had been destroyed, the economy devastated, causing widespread material and spiritual poverty, but there was also a strong energy and the will to rebuild this country and to renew this country, above all, in the European community on the basis of our faith, and to fit into the great Church of Christ which is the People of God and guides us towards the world of God. This is how at that moment we set out with great joy and enthusiasm. Then came the period of the Second Vatican Council in which all these hopes we had, seemed to come true; then the moment of the 1968 cultural revolution, difficult years in which the barque of the Lord appeared to be full of water, about to sink. And yet the Lord who seemed to be asleep at that moment was present and guided us onwards. Those were the years in which I worked with Bl. Pope John Paul II: unforgettable! Eventually the totally unexpected time came on 19 April 2005, when the Lord called me to a new commitment and, only through trust in his power, entrusting myself to him, was I able to pronounce the “yes” in that moment.

In these past 60 years, almost everything has changed, but the Lord's fidelity has remained. He is the same yesterday, today and for ever: and this is our certainty that paves our way to the future. The moment of memory, the moment of gratitude is also the moment of hope: *In te Domine speravi, non confundar in aeternum.*

I now thank the Lord for his guidance. I thank all of you for your fraternal company, may the Lord bless us all. And thank you for your gift and for all your collaboration. Let us move onwards with the Lord's help.