



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

TO MEMBERS OF THE ORDER OF AUGUSTINIAN RECOLLECTS 28 April 1979 *Beloved Brothers in*

Christ, Here, beside the Pope, you have desired to conclude this second week of Easter, during which you have gathered in Rome to examine yourselves thoroughly and to reflect on the realities and requirements of religious life at the present time, with a view to the preparation of the General Chapter. I wish, therefore, to congratulate you all the more in that this visit enables me to express to you not only my participation in your ecclesial concerns but also my cordial affection for the Order of Augustinian Recollects and all its members. Undoubtedly, these have been days of true meditation, days lived in familiar intimacy, praising God and conferring together, feeling joyfully close in thought and in heart with the spirituality and the lifestyle inherited from the Bishop of Hippo, St Augustine. Through communion of mind and of spirit with this great Father and Doctor of the Church, whose attractive human and religious personality offers itself, still imperishable, to us centuries afterwards, you know very well with whom you are in harmony: with the Word and the Love of God, with Christ. It is he and no one else who looks for you, who calls upon you insistently to choose at every moment to commit yourself to an adventure that is at once demanding and appealing, that ultimate reality that St Augustine confessed: "fecisti nos, Domine, ad te et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te" (*Confessions* 1.1). May this eminently contemplative feature of the "sequela Christi" never be distorted in your spiritual character. Contemplation, "the noblest occupation of the soul", is also a characteristic of your religious family. Let this particular experience be, in the expression of St Augustine himself, a dedication, body and soul, to the eternal: it is not idleness, but rest of the spirit, since the soul is invited to the rest of contemplation. This union with God, which springs from an attitude of complete and unconditional giving, must be the core from which you prepare to give your religious life its full meaning, as ambassadors of Christ in the midst of this world (cf. 2 Cor 5:20), according to the Spirit who has been given to you. I would like to repeat to you today with the Apostle St Paul: "Do not quench the Spirit" (1 Thess 5: 19), let yourselves be transported by his impetus, beg him to let you experience his grace day by day. Only in this way will you renew yourselves in the depths of your being, assimilating the action of God, which is dispensed not only through his knowledge and power, but is in its turn a gift of faithfulness, service, self-sacrifice, peace: in a word, of love. And only in this way will you arrive also at an exterior renewal which is true and fruitful, in line with the directives of the Council. Beloved Brothers and Sons: two days ago you celebrated the feast of the Virgin of Good Counsel, who has a noble place in your Institute and in your hearts. In this hour of reflection and ecclesial renewal, let yourselves be enlightened and guided by the Mother of Christ, the Mother of the Word become flesh. Ask for her help so that, in union of faith and sentiments, the work begun by St Augustine long ago will be a living force in the Church today and will indicate to all men that Christ, who died and rose again, is the true "way, truth and life". Receive my Blessing which, with sentiments of affection, I cordially extend also to all your brothers ©

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