



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

AT THE BOARD MEETING OF "SERRA INTERNATIONAL" Consistory Hall

Thursday, 28 February 1991 Dear Archbishop Mahony,

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ, I am very pleased to welcome you on the occasion of the Board Meeting of Serra International. My special greeting goes to your Episcopal Advisor and to your International President. I pray that God will abundantly bless your deliberations during these days, so that Serra International may further the spiritual growth of its members and persevere in its important goal of fostering vocations to the priesthood and religious life. The promotion of these special vocations is indeed essential for the Church's life and mission. While it is true that all the baptized have a role to play in the salvation of the world, it is the ordained priest who makes possible the Church's sacramental communion around the Eucharist, "the source and summit of Christian life" (*Lumen Gentium*, 11). At the same time, the life of consecration according to the evangelical counsels is the radical sign within the Church that the demands of the Gospel are being met in the total gift of self to God and his Kingdom as exemplified in the life of Christ. An increase of vocations to the priesthood and religious life is needed today in order to strengthen the whole Church and each of her members for the universal mission which has been entrusted to her: that all may believe and be saved. This is God's work, not our own; we are his servants, the instruments of his loving plan. In obedience to Christ's command, we "pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest" (*Luc.* 10, 2), because we recognize that the initiative for every vocation rests with God and not ourselves. Hence the importance of prayer, so earnestly promoted by Serra International, that God will bless his Church with many more holy and dedicated priests and religious. At the same time we also recognize that an environment must be created in which God's call can be heard, understood and accepted. By cherishing the ideals and the necessity of priestly and religious life in the face of widespread neglect or indifference, your organization tends the seedbed of God's planting, his gentle summons to respond to these special vocations within the context of the family, the local community, the parish and the diocese. Dear brothers and sisters, on behalf of the whole Church I thank you and all the members of "Serra International" for the efforts you are making to foster vocations through your prayers and activities. We must be confident that however great the Church's needs, the "Lord of the harvest" will not fail to heed our prayers or to make our efforts fruitful, in his own time and in his own way. I invoke upon you the intercession of your patron, Blessed Junipero Serra, and I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing to you and your families. © Copyright 1991 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana