



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI TO THE COMMUNITY OF "SANTA MARIA DELL'ANIMA"

Friday 12 May 2006

*Dear Brothers in the Priesthood,
Esteemed members of the Anima College,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

The commemoration of the canonical establishment 600 years ago of *Santa Maria dell'Anima* brings you to the Pope's house today. I therefore offer you a warm welcome here at the Vatican and I greet in particular the Rector and those in charge of this Pontifical Institute.

What began in 1406 with the Bull *Piae Postulatio* of my Predecessor Innocent VII, has borne abundant fruit down the centuries: the *Santa Maria dell'Anima* Institute was and is a home for German-speaking Catholics in Rome, for those who visit the Eternal City and especially for the large stable number of German-speaking Christian faithful who live and work here. The name *Anima* likewise denotes a residential college of priests whose members study at one of the Pontifical Athenaeums for advanced studies located in the city or work in the Roman Curia at the service of the universal Church. I address to you all a cordial "Hello!", together with my thanks for your faithfulness to the Successor of Peter, whom you desire to strengthen with this meeting!

The *dell'Anima* Institute has been marked from the outset by two distinctive features: veneration for Mary, Mother of God, and its special ties with the Holy See to which it is subordinate. The fact that the Blessed Virgin is venerated with the special title of "*Santa Maria dell'Anima*", Mother of souls, in your Institute and in your community highlights two aspects: Mary keeps her precious hand on the souls of the numerous pilgrims who walk the path of life and, for Rome, *Santa Maria dell'Anima* has become an important, and in many cases crucial, stopping place.

At the same time, this title of Mary reminds us of the deceased whom in our language we call "poor souls" and whose memory makes us aware of our mortality and our eternal destination to a

life in the infinity of God's light and love. May Mary, our heavenly Mother, keep her protective hand upon the parish life of the *Anima* community and upon the members of the Collegiate!

Ever since 1859, when my Predecessor, Bl. Pope Pius IX entrusted to the Anima Foundation the management of a college for priests, this Institute has rendered a special liaison service in the Church. The priests and seminarians who live at the *Anima* are able to understand the greatness and beauty of the universal Church and her catholicity, and find pleasure in the "*romanitas Ecclesiae*". I hope that the orientation of this German and at the same time Roman Institution will communicate to its residents and its guests special love for the Successors of the Apostle Peter and for the Holy See.

The German-speaking community of Rome finds its homeland in the Church of *Santa Maria dell'Anima*. This Church offers Catholics from the German-speaking countries the possibility of praying, singing and receiving the sacraments in their own language. I ask the priests and all who are responsible for it always to give priority in the *dell'Anima* community to sacramental life rather than to any of the other activities; for wherever German-speaking Catholics in Rome seek and find their own spiritual homeland, Jesus Christ, Lord of the Church, will desire to feel at home in their hearts. If the Lord is the centre of your parish life, your community will increasingly become an apostolic and missionary community that shines out in its surroundings and especially among the numerous visitors to this Church.

Dear friends, the commemoration of the 600th anniversary of the canonical establishment of *Santa Maria dell'Anima* must be a fruitful spiritual jubilee for you. As I thank you for your affection, through the intercession of Mary, the Blessed Virgin and Mother of God, I impart my heartfelt Apostolic Blessing to you all.

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