



The Holy See

ORDINARY PUBLIC CONSISTORY

FOR THE CREATION OF NEW CARDINALS **HOMILY OF JOHN PAUL II** Tuesday, 21 October 2003 Venerable and Dear Brothers, 1. Today's meeting is another moment of grace in these days that have been particularly full of ecclesial events. At this Consistory I have had the joy of presenting the Cardinal's biretta to 30 praiseworthy ecclesiastics, reserving *in pectore* the name of another. Some have worked closely with me in the Roman Curia; others carry out their ministry in venerable Churches of ancient tradition or of recent foundation; yet others have distinguished themselves in the study and defence of Catholic doctrine and in ecumenical dialogue. My cordial greeting goes to each and every one of them. I offer Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran a special greeting, and thank him for his thoughtful words on behalf of those who are entering the [College of Cardinals](#) today. I also greet with affection the Cardinals, the Venerable Patriarchs, the Bishops, the priests, the men and women religious and the faithful from all parts of the world who have come to support those being raised today to the dignity of Cardinal. In this square, as has been aptly pointed out, the old and new Church of Christ shines out today, assembled round the Successor of Peter. 2. While the College of Cardinals, enriched with new members, more clearly reflects the multiplicity of races and cultures that is a feature of the Christian people, it places a new emphasis on the unity of every part of Christ's flock with the See of the Bishop of Rome. Venerable Brother Cardinals, by the "title" attributed to you, you belong to the clergy of this city, of which the Successor of Peter is Bishop. Therefore, in a way, you make the ecclesial community in Rome larger, extending it to the farthest boundaries of the earth, in addition to making the Universal Church present in it. Thus, it expresses the very nature of Christ's mystical Body, the Family of God that embraces peoples and nations from everywhere, drawing them into the bond of the one faith and charity. And Peter is the visible foundation of this communion. In exercising his ministry, the Successor of the Fisherman of Galilee counts on your faithful collaboration; he asks you to accompany him with prayer, while he invokes the Holy Spirit so that communion among all whom the Lord "has chosen as vicars of his Son and constituted pastors" may never lessen (*Roman Missal*, Preface of the Apostles, I). 3. The crimson of the Cardinal's attire symbolizes the colour of blood and recalls the heroism of the martyrs. It is a symbol of a love for Jesus and for his Church that knows no bounds: love to the point of sacrificing one's life, "*usque ad sanguinis effusionem*". A great gift has therefore been given to you and it entails as great a responsibility. The Apostle Peter, in his First Letter, recalls the fundamental tasks of every Pastor, saying: "*Tend the flock of God that is your charge... being examples to the flock*" (1 Pt 5: 1-3). You must preach with your words and your example, as I made quite clear in the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation [Pastores Gregis](#), which I signed last Thursday in the presence of many of you. If this is true for every Pastor, it is true especially for you, dear and venerable members of the College of Cardinals. 4. In the Gospel passage just proclaimed, Jesus shows by his example how to bring this mission to completion, saying to his disciples, "Whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mk 10: 44). Only after his death, however, would the Apostles understand the full meaning of these words and, with the help

of the Spirit, fully accept their demanding "logic".The Redeemer continues to propose this same programme to those who, through the sacrament of Orders, are most closely associated with his mission. He asks them to convert to his "logic" that contrasts starkly with that of the world: to die to oneself to become humble, disinterested servants of one's brethren, shunning every temptation to make a career and to seek personal advancement.⁵ Dear and Venerable Brothers, only if you make yourselves the servants of all will you bring your mission to completion and help the Successor of Peter to be, in turn, the "servant of the servants of God", as my saintly Predecessor Gregory the Great liked to describe himself.This is undoubtedly a difficult ideal to achieve, but the Good Shepherd assures us of his support. We can also rely on the protection of Mary, Mother of the Church, and the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, the pillars and foundations of the Christian people.As for me, I once again express my esteem to you and accompany you with constant remembrance in prayer. May God grant, in the various offices he entrusts to you, that you spend your whole life for souls.To you all, I impart an affectionate Blessing. © Copyright 2003 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

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