



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

TO A GROUP OF DEACONS FROM THE DIOCESE OF REGENSBURG, LED BY BISHOP

RUDOLF GRABER *Saturday, 21 April 1979 Your Excellency,*

Mr Regens, dear deacons, I greet you heartily in the joy of the Easter octave at this short meeting. May the peace of the Risen Lord be with you all! That you wished, during your stay in the Eternal City, to pay a visit also to the Bishop of Rome, confirms your belief in his universal mission for the whole Church at the same time. As successor of St Peter, the first courageous witness to the resurrection of Christ, it is his duty today to strengthen brothers in faith (cf. Lk 22:31 f.). I would now like to carry out this task towards you with special joy by heartily congratulating you as deacons on the gift of grace of your vocation and by encouraging you on your way to the priesthood. It is something great to be chosen by God for closer participation in his son's mission of salvation for the redemption of mankind. The grace of the vocation to the priesthood is, as I stressed recently in my [letter to the priests](#): "the greatest gift of the Holy Spirit" (n. 2). It is a precious treasure, which we carry, it is true, in frail vessels, but which, precisely for this reason, must be all the more carefully preserved. Grasp this gift with both hands, without hesitation and anxious reservations, with full availability in the service of the People of God, with courageous and self-sacrificing love of Christ and of his Church! Be convinced from the first—to draw your attention particularly to another word from the above-mentioned [letter](#)—and prepare yourself conscientiously for it: "The only priest who will always prove necessary to people is the priest who is conscious of the full meaning of his priesthood: the priest who believes profoundly, who professes his faith with courage, who prays fervently, who teaches with deep conviction, who serves, who puts into practice in his own life the programme of the Beatitudes, who knows how to love disinterestedly, who is close to everyone, and especially to those who are most in need" (n. 7). Let my special prayer for you and at the same time my sincere wish for your bishop and your diocese be that such a fulfilled priesthood may be allotted to each of you through the grace of God and your personal religious effort. The convincing example of good priests will also be the most effective means for the promotion of new priestly vocations! For this purpose I willingly impart the Apostolic Blessing to you all for rich graces of Christ, the Risen and Eternal High Priest. ©

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