



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO THE NEWLY ORDAINED DEACONS OF THE NORTH AMERICAN COLLEGE

*Clementine Hall
Friday, 7 April 1989*

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to welcome you, the *newly ordained deacons of the North American College*, accompanied by the Rector and faculty of the College and by your families and friends. I warmly greet all of you and offer you my heartfelt good wishes on this joyous occasion.

My dear Deacons. In the words of Saint Paul, I “pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his call, and may fulfill your every good resolve and work of faith by his power” (2Thess. 1, 11). By virtue of the sacramental grace conferred through the imposition of hands, you have been ordained for the service of God’s people. Christ has called you to share in the Church’s mission of offering worship to “the Father in spirit and truth” (Jo. 4, 23), of preaching the Gospel and making disciples of all nations (Cfr. *Matth.* 28, 19), and of serving in charity the needs of your brothers and sisters (Cfr. *ibid.* 23, 31-46).

In the depths of your hearts be confident that Christ speaks to you his loving words: “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide” (Jo. 15, 16). Never allow the voices of a society often at odds with the Gospel to drown the voice of the Good Shepherd, who calls you to follow him and to model your life upon him who humbled himself so as to become the servant of all.

You will find the strength to fulfill your responsibilities in the Eucharist, the Liturgy of the Hours and daily personal prayer. Your knowledge and love of the Lord needs to grow and deepen continually as you dedicate yourselves to the service of others. The commitment of your time to meditating on

his word will never fail to be fruitful for your ministry. Your efforts to cultivate a spirit of poverty, sacrifice and self-control will ensure your growth in holiness and enable you to proclaim the Gospel ever more effectively. It is the Lord who through his grace at work in you will accomplish infinitely more than you can imagine.

At your ordination you made a promise to live a celibate life. Although this promise is motivated in part by a desire to serve your neighbour without reserve, its true foundation and inspiration is God's love for you in Christ and the special calling you have received to bear witness to Christ's kingdom which is already present but straining towards consummation (Cfr. *Lumen Gentium*, 5). Your promise of celibacy is thus a response to God which clearly manifests to the world your love of him and your self-giving for the sake of his kingdom.

In a special way I wish to express my gratitude to the parents, relatives and friends of these new deacons. May the Lord bless you for the sacrifices which you have made for these chosen men. May you continue to accept and support their decision to serve Christ and his Church. I also express my gratitude to the Rector and faculty of the North American College and to all who have been responsible for the intellectual and spiritual formation of these new deacons.

May Mary Immaculate, Patroness of your College and your Nation, assist all of you with her loving care. And in the peace and joy of her Risen Son, I willingly impart to all of you my Apostolic Blessing.

© Copyright 1989 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana