



# The Holy See

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**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II  
TO STUDENTS AND STAFF  
OF THE ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE OF BOSSEY**

*Thursday, 15 February 1996*

*Dear Friends in Christ,*

it gives me great pleasure to greet you, students and staff of the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey, on your pilgrimage to Rome.

For the past four months, you have been reflecting together on the theme "A Theology of Life". For us Christians, such a reflection and such a theology must start with and make constant reference to our Lord Jesus Christ, who "came that we may have life and have it abundantly".(1) Jesus in fact is the fullness of life to which every man and woman is called, a fullness which consists in sharing the very life of God himself.(2) It is the Church's mission always and everywhere to proclaim this truth, this "Gospel of life", especially in our own day when ever greater dangers threaten the life of individuals and peoples, particularly where it is weak and defenceless.(3)

Indeed, the Church is aware that this proclamation of the Gospel includes not only the defence of human life as such, but also the obligation to promote everything that favours the development of human life and dignity. There is an essential relationship between proclaiming the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ and being committed to peace, justice, and the advancement of human rights. An authentic "theology of life" must not fail to recognize this relationship and clearly state its practical consequences.

Dear friends, you will soon go back to your own countries and your own Churches and communities. It is my hope and prayer that, with the help of the Holy Spirit, you will be witnesses to the "Gospel of life" in its fullness as revealed by Jesus Christ, who is "the Way, and the Truth, and the Life".(4) God bless you all.

(1) Cfr. *Io.* 10, 10.

(2) Cfr. Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Evangelium Vitae*, 2.

(3) Cfr. Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Evangelium Vitae*, 3.

(4) Cfr. *Io.* 14, 6.

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