



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF POPE LEO XIV
TO PRIESTS OF THE PONTIFICAL ECCLESIASTICAL ACADEMY RETURNING AFTER A
YEAR DOING MISSIONARY WORK**

*Apostolic Palace
Friday, 20 June 2025*

[Multimedia]

I am pleased to meet you today, and to address my cordial greeting to every one of you. I welcome your President, Archbishop Salvatore Pennacchio, your Prefect of Studies, Msgr. Gabriel Viola, and you, dearest Priests, who have just returned from your experience of the Missionary Year, the culmination of your formation at the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy.

Last week, meeting your companions of the *Alma mater* of the pontifical diplomats, I had the opportunity to reiterate the value of this formative insight, introduced by my venerable Predecessor. I urged them to be and to remain “pastors with your feet on the ground”, to embody that figure of the priest in the service of the Pope in the pontifical Representations, clearly outlined in the Chirograph *The Petrine Ministry*, with which it was intended to give new impetus to your centuries-old institution, as it approaches the celebration of the 325th anniversary of its founding.

As I affirmed in various meetings in the context of the recent Jubilee of the Holy See, the guardianship of that care for all the Churches – proper to the ministry entrusted to me – needs the faithful and irreplaceable service of the Secretariat of State and of the Pontifical Representations, which whom you will soon begin to collaborate.

Therefore, I urge you too to exercise the gift of your priesthood with humility and meekness, the capacity for listening and proximity, as faithful and tireless disciples of Christ the Good Shepherd. Whatever the tasks entrusted to you may be, in whatever part of the world you may find yourselves, the Pope must be able to count on priests who, in prayer as in work, do not spare

themselves in bringing his closeness to the peoples and to the Churches with their witness.

I thank you again for the docility and self-sacrifice with which you have spent the past year in the most diverse contexts, and I warmly bless the start of your ministry in the diplomatic service of the Holy See.

Holy See Press Office Bulletin, 20 June 2025

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