



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF PAUL VI TO A GROUP OF AMERICAN PRIESTS

Wednesday, 27 October 1971

Venerable Brother and dear sons in Christ,

It is a pleasure for us to receive you today. We know that the occasion of your coming to Rome is the celebration of the fortieth anniversary of your ordination to the priesthood. We are happy to have a part with you in the joy of this event. Your sentiments are those of thankfulness for the many blessings you have received during these years of priestly ministry; We know that you are grateful to the Lord for calling you to serve his people and for sustaining you to this day by his love. We share also in your thanksgiving.

As you recall the happy day of your ordination and the subsequent events that have made up your priestly lives, We would wish to add a word of exhortation and encouragement. With Saint Paul We would remind you to seize this occasion to stir into flame the gift that God gave all of you through ordination (Cfr. *2 Tim.* 1, 6). Renew the dedication that you made to Jesus Christ and to his Church. Over the years many changes have occurred in the Church.

By the grace of God you see more clearly now the demands of your ministry and how much the Lord asks of you. And yet, for you, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever" (*Hebr.* 13, 8). Your ideals are the same as before: dedication to God's love and to the humble service of all-especially the poor. Your ministry is still to preach the liberating and uplifting message of Christ's Gospel and to renew the Sacrifice and Supper of the Lord.

Dear sons, go forth, continue with confidence. And as you work and struggle for the Church - which Christ loves so much - keep your hope fixed forever on the living God (Cfr. *1 Tim.* 4, 10).

With deep affection in the Lord, We give you Our Apostolic Blessing.

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