



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI
TO A GROUP OF PRIESTS
FROM THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA***

Monday 17, December 1973

Dear friends, dear sons in the Lord,

You are dear to us by these titles.

You are our co-workers in the Gospel, and all of us together are co-workers with Christ in the building up of his Kingdom of justice and love.

All of us are united in the doctrine that we profess and in the apostolic teaching which we have received in the Church and which we are charged to preach to this generation and to transmit in its fullness to the generations yet to come.

We are united in the Christian fellowship that knows but "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (*Eph. 4, 5*). We are, moreover, sharers in the one ministerial priesthood which enables us to perform a life-giving, healing and uplifting ministry of service to our brethren throughout the world.

We are united in re-enacting for the Christian people the supreme immolation of Christ's priesthood, as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior.

And we are united in prayer "with Mary the Mother of Jesus and with his brethren" (*Act. 1, 14*) in invoking the name of Jesus and proclaiming in his Holy Spirit the praises of his Father.

Yes, dear sons, you are close to us for many reasons and we are happy to be able to tell you this.

And today it is our hope to confirm you in your commitment to Christ Jesus, to encourage you to that fidelity which in the Acts of the Apostles characterized the early Christian community: "These remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and

to the prayers" (*Act. 2, 42*).

We likewise hope that after these months of prayerful study and shared discussion in your Institute you will go out from Rome truly renewed, having acquired "a fresh, spiritual way of thinking" (*Eph. 4, 23*). May you be ever more effective ministers of the Gospel and, in every way, worthy servants of the Christian people, and of the world in need.

And so by virtue of special responsibility that is ours towards the universal Church as Successor of Peter and Vicar of Christ, we call upon each of you "to preach the word, to stay with this task whether convenient or inconvenient" (*2 Tim. 4, 2*). We rely on your help and on your wholehearted service to the People of God. In particular, we exhort you to lend the full measure of your collaboration so that the spiritual aims of the Holy Year may be achieved, and that renewal and reconciliation may permeate the world.

And with affection in Christ Jesus we bless you in his name.