



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI
TO THE SUPERIORS AND STUDENTS OF THE
PONTIFICAL ECCLESIASTICAL ACADEMY****

Thursday, 22 February 1973

We wish to express to you our joy at this meeting, dear pupils of the Pontifical Ecclesiastic Academy, which sees you gathered around us, together with your venerated President. Mons. Felice Pirozzi.

A hearty welcome to you! Your visit takes on a special significance on today's feast of St Peter's Chair: and this liturgical recurrence, celebrated in Rome since the fourth century to signify the unity of the Church founded on the Apostle, rouses in our spirit, as it certainly does in yours, a wave of sentiments, suggesting to us some considerations which we think are suited to the happy circumstance of your visit.

It is the feast which recalls efficaciously the function of Peter in the Church, that is his particular charism of unity and cohesion for the whole ecclesial structure, as our Predecessor St. Leo the Great stresses in the page we read today in the Liturgy of the Hours, *ut, quamquam in populo Dei multi sacerdotes sint multique pastores, omnes tamen proprie regat Petrus, quos principaliter regit et Christus* (Sermo IV de natali ipsius; PL 54, 149).

You will be the humble, but precious servants of this charism of Peter through which he continues to strengthen his brothers in the faith (cf Lk. 22, 32). And therefore you realize with what anxious care the Holy See prepares you for your future and difficult task. It will send you to collaborate in the various Pontifical representations, scattered all over the world, in order that you may testify, with a discreet, sacrificed action, often unknown to most people, to the operating presence of the Successor of Peter in the service of the local Churches and of the good of the various peoples.

In these few years, you have to work at a great programme of specifically priestly sanctification, in

full and genuine devotion to the Church, and at a deep intellectual training, in order to be equal to the task that will be entrusted to you with so much confidence and hope. We hope, therefore, that you will always see in your task, of today and tomorrow, the implementation of a particularly precious and deserving ecclesial service, which must be lived in a really evangelical spirit of charity and dedication.

We invoke upon you the maternal protection of the Blessed Virgin, and, as a sign of our continual benevolence, we impart to you and to your dear ones the propitiating Apostolic Blessing, which we extend especially to Mons. President, to his collaborators and to the whole teaching staff.

*ORa n.10 p.2.
