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Audience with the Community of the Seminary of Barcelona

This morning, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the community of the Seminary of Barcelona, Spain.

After handing out the address prepared for the occasion, the Pope engaged in dialogue with those present at the meeting.

The following is the address prepared by the Holy Father for the circumstance:

Address of the Holy Father

Esteemed Rector,

Dear students of the Conciliar Seminary of Barcelona:

I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your words, and I welcome you to this house of Peter, which is the house of the whole Church. I know that you have longed for this meeting and have asked your Archbishop, with insistence, to be here. You see, persevering prayer bears fruit, never forget that. It is also important to invoke the mediation of the Church, so do not fail to ask for the prayers of your pastors and of the faithful, so that God may grant you perseverance on the path of good.

When speaking to those in the process of formation, there are two temptations: to focus on the bad, taking into account only negative experiences, or to try to present an idyllic and unreal world. That is why, keeping with the theme of prayer with which we began, I found interesting a little book by a bishop saint of your land, Saint Manuel González, who describes in a priestly rosary the good and the bad that questions us, making it into a prayer which, through the intercession of our Immaculate Mother, we present to God.

Remember that, when you become priests, your first obligation will be a life of prayer born of gratitude for that

love of predilection which God showed you in calling you to his service. This is the first joyful mystery from which everything is born. In this phase of formation in which you find yourselves, it would do you good if in your prayer you could confront yourselves with the attitudes of the Blessed Virgin, asking yourselves: how did she react when God called her, and how did I? With what zeal do I approach my future priestly life? Will I rise up," says Saint Emmanuel, "like a bubble in a boiling pot of love, to bring God to the world? Will I carry him to the mountains, to the most arduous and painful places?"

The priest "is not a dominator of souls by silver and gold... his wealth, his power, is only the virtue of the name of Jesus", meaning, to make him present in the Eucharist, in the sacraments, in the word, to be born in the hearts of men, to be his instrument in everything and always. That is why we give ourselves, like Jesus, in the temple, as victims, for the redemption of the world. And in the last joyful mystery there is a very important idea for your whole life, never leave it, I am referring to Jesus lost in the temple, to that Jesus whom I must always return to seek in the tabernacle. Lose yourselves there with Him, to wait for your faithful: "the good priest knows very well that, as long as he has eyes to weep with, hands to mortify himself with and body to afflict, he has no right to say that he has done all he had to do for the souls entrusted to him".

And we come to the glorious mysteries, which are our thanksgiving for the Mass of Jesus on the cross. After the triumph of the resurrection, Jesus entered the sanctuary of heaven and from there perpetuates this continual thanksgiving. Seeing him seated at the right hand of the Father inspires us to hope and fills us with joy, because he assures us of paradise. For this God sends the Holy Spirit, who alone can teach us these mysteries, and one day he will give you the gift of being priests of Christ. Never cease to savour and remember this love of predilection which pours and will pour itself abundantly into your heart, at your ordination and for the rest of your days. Never extinguish that fire which will make you fearless preachers of the Gospel, dispensers of divine treasures. Unite your flesh to that of Jesus, like Mary, to immolate yourselves with Him in the Eucharistic sacrifice, and also in the glory of His triumph.

Dear seminarians, take up your rosary, then, and ask Mary, Queen and Mother of Mercy, to help you to unveil the mysteries of the priesthood to which God calls you, contemplating the mysteries of her Son, accepting that the joy of discipleship and perfect identification on the cross are the only way to glory. May God bless you.
