



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS THE SEMINARIANS OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PROVINCE OF TOLEDO (SPAIN)

*Consistory Hall
Thursday, 7 November 2024*

[Multimedia]

Good morning, how silent you are!

Dear bishops,

Dear formators and staff of the Seminary,

Dear Seminarians,

I am pleased to meet a new group of seminarians who, like the confraternities in the towns of Spain, come in procession to this Mother Church, for a station of penance. Penance, or tourism?

This analogy came to my mind, first of all because it is always useful to look at the Holy People of God in their spirituality, their simple spirituality. You know that priests must be close, they must promote proximity. First, closeness with God, so that there may be capacity to encounter the Lord, to be close to the Lord. Second, closeness with bishops, and bishops close to priests. A priest who is not close to his bishop is “lame”, he is lacking something. Third, closeness among you priests, which already begins in the seminary, and fourth, closeness to the holy faithful people of God. Do not forget these four forms of proximity.

I know that in these days you are preparing for the procession of the “*Reservado*”. An ancient tradition that commemorates the first time the Blessed Sacrament was *reservado*, or rather conserved, in the Tabernacle of the chapel. Watch how you genuflect when you go, watch.

This interesting commemoration consists of three moments: the celebration of the Eucharist, the exposition of the Sacrament during the entire day, and finally the procession. These phases can

serve to remind us of the fundamental elements of the priesthood for which you are preparing. First of all, the *Eucharistic celebration*. It is Jesus who comes into our life to give us the proof of the greatest love. He invites us, as Church, to make ourselves present in the priesthood and among the people, in the sacrament and in the Word. May having him on earth absorb your life and your heart.

Then, the Lord remains *exposed in the monstrance* all day long. It is a time to be alone with Him, to hear His voice in silence, in listening to the Word, in the witness of faith of those who pray beside us. Only the person-to-person, loving encounter with Jesus can illuminate, maintain and sustain the course of our earthly day. May this encounter truly be an effective impulse that transforms your existence.

Finally, carrying the Lord *in procession*, because we receive Him in order to carry Him: our ministry is to accompany Christ towards His people, and the people towards Christ. May you, without turning your gaze away from the One who judges us, learn to walk together in the hope of the encounter of which we already have a foretaste here in a sacramental way. Thank you.

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