



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO STUDENTS AND STAFF OF THE
PONTIFICAL BEDA COLLEGE***

Monday, 4 June 1984

Dear Brothers in Christ,

it gives me great pleasure to welcome the students and staff of the Pontifical Beda College. I especially wish to greet the newly-ordained priests, who are about to leave Rome to take up pastoral appointments at home. Having completed your course of studies and fulfilled the requirements of formation, you will presently serve God's people through the exercise of the sacred ministry of the Church. As you are aware, this service implies both a vocation and a mission: you have been called to go forth in Christ's name to preach his Gospel of love, to speak his words of forgiveness, to celebrate his presence in the midst of the ecclesial community.

As you begin your priestly service, I encourage you always to remember the important lessons that you have learned during these years in Rome. Continue to grow intellectually. No matter how busy your life may become, you must spend some part of each day studying the word of God and meditating on its meaning. It is never sufficient for you merely to read the word of God or to speak of its meaning without allowing its power and all its demands to penetrate deeply within your being. What you do, what you say, what you are, must be rooted in that word.

You are here today precisely because you were open to God's call when it challenged you to leave everything and follow him. You must never tire of hearing God speak to you anew and beckon you to respond to ever greater demands in the building up of his Church. But this also requires that there be regular periods of silence in your life and a daily discipline of prayer. The call to priestly service is above all a summons to be holy as Jesus himself is holy.

My brothers, be filled with gratitude for the rich blessings that our Saviour has bestowed upon you

in your vocation, and for the exciting invitation that he offers you through a sharing in his Priesthood. Strive in what you do, no matter how small or insignificant it may seem, to accomplish everything with fidelity and with love. And may Christ's farewell gift of peace be your great consolation and your great joy.

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