



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS
POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO THE COMMUNITY
OF THE PONTIFICAL BEDA COLLEGE**

23 May 1997

Dear Friends in Christ,

1. With great joy I welcome you - *the seminarians, student priests and former students of the Pontifical Beda College*, together with the Rector, the Staff and the Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood who have served the College for thirty years. On the happy occasion of your Centenary, I join you in thanking God for the "great things" (cf. Lk 1:49) which, over the last hundred years, he has accomplished through your College for the good of the Church. Since its establishment, the Beda has remained steadfastly committed to its mission of providing mature men from English-speaking countries with a solid preparation for the priestly ministry.
2. Your Centenary coincides with the Church's preparations for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000. I urge you to celebrate the hundred years of the College in a spirit of prayerful anticipation of the great anniversary of the Redemptive Incarnation of Jesus, the Son of God. Those called to be "shepherds after the Lord's own heart" (cf. Jer 3:5) must be the first to aspire to what I wished for all the Church's members in my Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, namely, "a true longing for holiness, a deep desire for conversion and personal renewal in a context of ever more intense prayer and of solidarity with their neighbour, especially the most needy" (No.42). Since priests are sacramentally configured to Christ, the Head, Shepherd and Servant of the Church, they especially are bound to be "holy and blameless in his sight" (cf. Eph 1:4).
3. In your Patron, the Venerable Bede, you have a model of a priest who dedicated himself to the devout study and contemplation of Sacred Scripture. May familiarity with God's holy word be the source of your faith and joy, and may it enlighten your minds to "preach the Gospel to the whole

creation" (Mk 16:15) with conviction and power!

I pray that on the occasion of the Hundredth Anniversary of the Pontifical Bede College the Holy Spirit will fill you with a burning zeal to bring Christ, the hope of humanity, to a world yearning for the love and peace which only God can give. I thank the College for its fidelity to the Successor of Peter down the years, and I commend you and the benefactors of the College to the loving intercession of Mary, Mother of Jesus the Eternal High Priest. With my Apostolic Blessing.

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