



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE COMMUNITY
OF THE PONTIFICAL PIO BRAZILIAN COLLEGE**

Thursday, 1 April 2004

Dear Rector and Superiors,

Dear Students of the Pontifical Pio Brazilian College of Rome,

1. I am delighted to welcome you at this meeting with which you wish to renew your affection and loyalty to the Successor of Peter on the 70th anniversary of the foundation of your College. I thank the Rector, Fr Geraldo Antônio Coelho de Almeida, S.J., for his kind words to me expressing your sentiments and hopes.

Your presence here reminds me of the Visit I paid to your College in 1982, when I celebrated the Eucharist in your Chapel and had an opportunity to speak to you and to visit some parts of your centre.

2. The Pio Brazilian College was opened on 3 April 1934 at the wish of Pope Pius XI and the Bishops of Brazil, and especially of Cardinal Sebastião Leme. Each one of you, sent by your Bishop, is welcomed by this College which provides you with a favourable environment for a broader academic and spiritual formation, so necessary in your mission as priests. Staying in Rome for several years offers you many opportunities to come into contact with the historical memorials of the early centuries of Christianity, to open yourselves to the universal dimension of the Church, to foster ecclesial communion and the willingness to accept the teachings of the Magisterium.

3. Even if it is physically remote, I know that you will keep alive in your hearts the memory of the persons in your pastoral care; truly, a Pastor cannot forget his faithful when he lives pastoral charity in the style of Christ. I would like to recall that ever-new message which I addressed to you

on my last Visit here: *the Church in Brazil needs well-trained ministers of Christ* (cf. *Address*, 24 January 1982). This responsibility is particularly incumbent on your formation teachers, not only at the universities you attend, but directly on the Religious of the Society of Jesus who have been entrusted with the direction and animation of this College. Please God that the founding spirit bequeathed by St Ignatius will constantly inspire you, because the Brazilian Bishops and the whole People of God are longing for holy and devout priests, true pastors of souls. This responsibility becomes even greater when we think that some priests come from other Latin American countries, and from Africa, Oceania and Europe.

4. I do not want to end this talk without thanking the Community of women religious and all of you who help care for the College. I ask God to reward you for your generous and zealous service to the Community.

May Our Lady, venerated in your College as Nossa Senhora Aparecida, who has always accompanied all her children and who is the Mother of Priests, grant you the grace you need to imitate Jesus Christ, the Eternal High Priest. As a pledge of these hopes, I impart to you a favourable Apostolic Blessing, which I cordially extend to your relatives and friends.