



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN A SEMINAR
ORGANIZED BY THE CONGREGATION
FOR THE EVANGELIZATION OF PEOPLES
FOR THE BISHOPS OF THE YOUNG CHURCHES**

Thursday, 16 September 2004

Your Eminence,

Dear Brothers in the Episcopate, 1. I greet all of you who are taking part in the Formation Meeting organized by the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples to support you in your responsibility for serving the Churches in the mission countries that have been entrusted to you. I thank Cardinal Crescenzo Sepe, Prefect of the Dicastery, for his kind words on your behalf, and I thank everyone who has prepared for and enlivened this meeting. 2. I am delighted with the vitality of your Churches. They are called in all the cultures to express the communion of the one Church of Christ in fidelity to the Magisterium. Your primary task is *to be the zealous guardians of the integrity of the faith and the unity of the Church*. Called to follow Christ, you must take care constantly to nurture communion with the Roman Pontiff and with the other Bishops, especially within the Bishops' Conference and the Ecclesiastical Province (cf. *Pastores Gregis*, n. 22). 3. *Be models for the Christian people*, finding the strength to be servants of the Gospel in a spiritual approach, an intense sacramental life and continual formation. In the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Gregis*, stressing that the Bishops' ministry of sanctification is ordered to the holiness of the People of God, I added: "In his ministry, *the Bishop must tirelessly promote a genuine pastoral and educational programme of holiness*" (n. 41). To lead the people of believers to true holiness and to express the Christian hope, may each one of you make St Paul's view your own: "For if I preach the Gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel" (I Cor 9: 16). 4. Dear Brothers in the Episcopate, in a few days you will be returning to your communities, all too often sorely tried. Assure them of the prayers and affectionate closeness of the Pope in their intentions. Tell the Pastors that the Church is counting on them to be witnesses in their words and throughout their lives. May the Virgin Mary, Queen of Missions, help you in the service that has been entrusted to you! I very willingly impart to all of you, to your Dioceses and to the organizers of this formation meeting, a special Apostolic Blessing.