



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO THE COMMUNITY OF THE
PONTIFICAL REGIONAL SEMINARY OF SARDINIA**

Clementine Hall

Saturday, 17 February

2018[\[Multimedia\]](#)

Dear Brothers in the Episcopate,

Dear Teachers and Students,

I welcome you on the occasion of the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Pontifical Regional Seminary of Sardinia. Pope Pius XI had urged the Italian Bishops, especially of the south-central region and of the islands, to agree to concentrate on Seminaries, with the aim of properly providing for the education of aspiring priests. In your Region the Seminary had its home firstly in Cagliari, together with the Faculty of Theology; it was later transferred to the capital. I greet you all with affection, beginning with your Pastors, in particular Archbishop Arrigo Miglio of Cagliari, whom I thank for his words.

On this occasion I would like to join you in giving praise to the Lord, who in these years has accompanied with his grace the life of many priests formed in this important educational institution dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It has given the Church numerous ministers engaged in your local Churches, in the *missione ad gentes* and in other services to the universal Church. May this commemorative occasion give new impulse to your vocational ministry, to the renewed and diligent formation of candidates to the Sacred Order, to the benefit of the People of God.

Dear Seminarians, you are preparing to be future workers in the Lord's harvest, priests who know how to work together, even among different dioceses. This is particularly valuable for a region such as Sardinia, which is imbued with faith and Christian religious traditions, and which needs, due also to its insular condition, special care for the relations among the various diocesan communities. Today's material and spiritual poverty make even more important what has always been called for: namely, that pastors be attentive to the poor, capable of being with them, with a

simple way of life, so that the poor may feel that our Churches are firstly their homes. I encourage you to prepare from now on to become priests *of* the people and *for* the people, not domineering the flock entrusted to you (cf. 1 Pt 5:3), but servants. There is so much need of men of God who look at what is essential, who lead a sober and transparent life, without nostalgia for the past but able to look ahead according to the sound tradition of the Church.

In these years of preparation for the ordained ministry, you have been experiencing a special and unique moment of your life. May you be ever more aware of the grace that the Lord has granted to you by making resonate in you the invitation to leave all and follow him, to be with him in order to be sent out to preach (cf. Mt 4:19-20; Mk 3:14). In you, in a particular way, the hopes of the Church in Sardinia are answered! Your bishops follow you with affection and trepidation, counting greatly on you and on your aim to conform to Jesus the Good Shepherd for the good and the sanctity of the Christian communities of your region. Proceed with joy, tenacity and seriousness in this journey of formation, so as to assume the apostolic way of life, which is able to respond to the daily demands of evangelization.

The Seminary, before and even more than a functional institution for the acquisition of theological and pastoral competency and a place for a life in common and for study, is a true and proper ecclesial experience, a unique community of missionary disciples, called to closely follow the Lord Jesus, to be with him day and night, to share the mystery of his Cross and Resurrection, and to be exposed to the Word and to the Spirit, so as to confirm and mature the specific characteristics of the apostolic *sequela*. Henceforth, may your attentiveness prepare you appropriately to accept a free and irrevocable choice of total fidelity to Christ, to his Church and to your vocation and mission.

The Seminary is the school of this fidelity, which is learned first and foremost in prayer, particularly in liturgical prayer. In this time, friendship with Jesus is cultivated, centred on the Eucharist and nourished by contemplation and by the study of Sacred Scripture. The ministry cannot be exercised well if we do not live in union with Christ. Without him we can do nothing (cf. Jn 15:5).

In the journey of the Seminary the role of formators is decisive: the quality of the presbytery depends in large part on the commitment of those responsible for formation. They are called to work with rectitude and wisdom for the development of a coherent and balanced character capable of validly assuming, so as then to responsibly carry out, the presbyteral mission. In this delicate formative work, your Seminary also performs an indispensable service to the Dioceses, fostering the quality of formation of the clergy and communion among the Churches.

I entrust everyone to the maternal protection of Our Lady of Bonaria. I can tell you from experience that the Seminary is a privileged moment in which one experiences this loving presence of Our Lady in our life. She is always watching over each of you with attentive love. She is your Mother. Turn to Mary often and with trust. I assure all of you of my prayers and my blessing. And please, I ask you to pray for me.

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