



The Holy See

VISIT TO THE COMMUNITY OF THE ROMAN MAJOR SEMINARY
ON OCCASION OF THE FEAST OF OUR LADY OF TRUST

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

Saturday, 25 February 2006

*Dear Brothers in the Episcopate and in the Presbyterate,
Dear Seminarians,
Brothers and Sisters,*

It gives me great pleasure to be with you this evening at the Roman Major Seminary on such a special occasion as the Feast of your Patroness, Our Lady of Trust.

I greet you all with affection and thank you for having welcomed me so warmly. I greet in particular the Cardinal Vicar and the Bishops present; I greet Mons. Giovanni Tani, the Rector, and I thank him for his words on behalf of the other priests and all the seminarians, to whom I gladly extend my greeting. I then greet the young people and all those from the different parishes of Rome who have come here to spend this joyful moment with us.

I have long been awaiting an opportunity to come in person to visit you who make up the community of the Seminary, one of the most important places in the Diocese. There are many seminaries in Rome but this one, strictly speaking, is the Diocesan Seminary, as is recalled by its location here in the Lateran, next to the Cathedral of St John, the Cathedral of Rome.

Consequently, following a tradition dear to beloved Pope John Paul II, I have made the most of today's feast to meet you here, where you pray, study and live in brotherhood, training for your future pastoral ministry.

It really is very beautiful and meaningful that you venerate the Virgin Mary, Mother of Priests, with the special title of *Our Lady of Trust*. It evokes a twofold meaning: the trust of the Seminarians

who, with her help, set out on their journey in response to Christ who has called them, and the trust of the Church of Rome, especially that of her Bishop, which invokes the protection of Mary, the Mother of every vocation, upon this nursery-garden of priests.

It is with Mary's help, dear Seminarians, that today you can prepare for your mission as priests at the service of the Church. A moment ago, when I paused in prayer before the venerable image of Our Lady of Trust in your Chapel, which is the heart of your Seminary, I prayed for each one of you. In the meantime, I was thinking once again of the many seminarians who have passed through the Roman Seminary and have subsequently served Christ's Church with love. I am thinking among others of Fr Andrea Santoro, recently killed in Turkey while he was praying. And I also called upon the Mother of the Redeemer to obtain for you the gift of holiness. May the Holy Spirit, who shaped the priestly Heart of Jesus in the Virgin's womb and later at the house in Nazareth, work within you with his grace, preparing you for the future tasks that will be entrusted to you.

It is equally beautiful and appropriate today that together with the Virgin Mother of Trust, we should venerate in a special way her husband, St Joseph, who has inspired Mons. Marco Frisina's Oratory this year. I thank him for his sensitivity, for having chosen to honour my holy Patron, and I congratulate him on this composition, while I warmly thank the soloists, the choir, the organist and all the members of the orchestra.

This Oratory, significantly entitled *Shadow of the Father*, affords me an opportunity to emphasize how the example of St Joseph, a "just man", the Evangelist says, fully responsible before God and before Mary, should be an encouragement to all of you on your way towards the priesthood.

Joseph appears to us ever attentive to the voice of the Lord, who guides the events of history, and ready to follow the instructions, ever faithful, generous and detached in service, an effective teacher of prayer and of work in the hidden life at Nazareth. I can assure you, dear Seminarians, that the further you advance with God's grace on the path of the priesthood, the more you will experience what abundant spiritual fruits result from calling on St Joseph and invoking his support in carrying out your daily duty.

Dear Seminarians, please accept my most cordial best wishes for your present and your future. I place them in the hands of Mary Most Holy, Our Lady of Trust. May those who are formed at the Roman Major Seminary learn to repeat the beautiful invocation, *Mater mea, fiducia mea*, your distinctive motto that was coined by my Venerable Predecessor Benedict XV.

I pray that these words will be impressed upon the hearts of each one of you and will accompany you always, in your life and in your priestly ministry. Thus, you will be able to spread around you, wherever you may be, the fragrance of Mary's trust which is trust in God's provident and faithful love.

I assure you that you will be present in my prayers every day, for you are the hope of the Church of Rome. And I now cordially and joyfully impart my Apostolic Blessing to you and to everyone present, as well as to your relatives and to all who are close to you on your way towards the priesthood.

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