



The Holy See

MESSAGE OF POPE JOHN PAUL II AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

To my Venerable Brother Bishop Renato Corti of Novara

At the conclusion of the Spiritual Exercises which you have led with appropriate meditations, dear and venerable Brother, I would like to express my warmest gratitude to you. I am pleased to do so after the Holy Mass and Adoration with which I wanted to conclude this week of silence and intense prayer in the year especially dedicated to the Eucharist. We have thus emphasized that this Mystery is at the heart of our daily life.

The Spiritual Exercises have been a providential opportunity, for myself and for my numerous Collaborators in the Roman Curia, for extensive meditation. Your reflections have helped us to listen with docility and attention to the Holy Spirit who speaks to the Church today.

With the spiritual depth and pastoral wisdom that distinguishes you, you have helped us to meditate on: "The Church at the service of the new and everlasting Covenant". The theme echoes the words Our Lord Jesus spoke at the end of the Last Supper, as he offered the sacred chalice to the Apostles. We who are ministers of the altar repeat these words every time that we celebrate Holy Mass. Making reference to the Blood that flowed from the wounds of the crucified Christ, and especially from his pierced side, they evoke the meaning of the Sacrament of the Eucharist. The Church "*draws her life from the Eucharist*", because from that Blood she is born and fortified for her daily dedication to the tasks relating to the proclamation of the Gospel.

I am therefore delighted to extend my and our thanks to you on the occasion of today's special Eucharistic Celebration. In the heart of the Church, we are gathered together around the Mystery of the Altar, knowing that the pulsating centre of communion and of the mission of the entire Christian people is here. Thanks also to your contribution in these days, enhanced by the pastoral sensitivity which you have developed in your ministry among such large numbers of priests, seminarians and the faithful, we feel renewed and fervent zeal for setting out afresh from Christ in

the Eucharist, to witness to the world to God's new and everlasting Covenant with humanity.

May the Lord reward you and conform you ever more closely to himself, filling you with an abundance of consolations! May Mary Most Holy constantly watch over you and your service to the Church, and may my Apostolic Blessing, which I cordially impart to you and likewise extend to all who are entrusted to your pastoral care, be with you.

From the Vatican, 19 February 2005

JOHN PAUL II

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