



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO THE STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

FROM THE ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE OF BOSSEY Thursday, 7 February 1991 Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am especially pleased to welcome the participants in the *Ecumenical Institute of Bossey*, on the occasion of your visit to Rome. "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (*Phil.* 1, 2). In the Graduate School, during the last few months, you have reflected on the theme: "Come Holy Spirit— Renew the Whole Creation", which is also the theme of the Seventh Assembly of the World Council of Churches now taking place in Canberra. The Holy Spirit, "the Lord and Giver of Life", as we profess in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, is indeed the One who vivifies, animates and renews the whole of creation. The Psalmist describes this with awe and hope when he exclaims: "You hide your face, they are dismayed; you take back your spirit, they die, returning to the dust from which they came. You send forth your spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the earth" (*Psa.* 104 [103], 29-30). The Spirit is also the source of all that the Father communicates through the Son for the salvation of the world. In a special way his work is directed to the confirmation of God's people in the truth. We read in the Gospel of John: "When the Spirit of truth comes he will lead you to the complete truth" (*Jo.* 16, 13). Because of this, the Holy Spirit is the primary agent of Christian unity. He inspires all genuine efforts to increase understanding, cooperation and unity among Christ's disciples. In a particular way, he opens the path to reconciliation, not only among people but throughout creation. That is why it is possible to pray: "Come Holy Spirit - Renew the Whole Creation". In the recent Encyclical which I devoted to the theme of the Church's missionary activity, I recalled that "efforts towards (Christian) unity are themselves a sign of the work of reconciliation which God is bringing about in our midst" (Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Redemptoris Missio*, 50). We must be convinced that the most urgent and impelling part of the divine plan to reconcile all things in Christ relates, in a pre-eminent way, to the unity of all who have been buried with him in Baptism (Cfr. *Col.* 2, 12). Your study and prayerful reflection at Bossey will surely have inspired you to thank God for all that you have received from him through the Holy Spirit. Your visit to the tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul here in Rome has perhaps brought to your mind the wonderful way in which the Spirit worked through their ministry in the early community of believers, as described in the *Acts of the Apostles*. As you return to your own communities, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope" (*Rom.* 15, 13). © Copyright 1991 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana