



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PROFESSORS AND STUDENTS OF
THE ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE OF BOSSEY**

*Consistory Hall
Thursday, 9 February 1995*

Dear Friends,

I am pleased once again to welcome the professors and students of the Graduate School of the *Ecumenical Institute of Bossey* on the occasion of your annual visit to Rome. I greet you with the words of the Apostle Paul to the first Christians of this City: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 1:7).

The theme of your programme of studies – "Education for Koinonia" – recalls the communion uniting all who, through baptism and faith, share the dignity of belonging to God's People, "a people made one with the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit" (*Lumen Gentium*, 4). This communion is first and foremost a gift of God. By its very nature it calls for visible expression; indeed, the visible unity of Christ's followers constitutes the Church as the *sacrament of salvation*, the living sign of the reconciliation and peace won for us by the blood of the Cross. At the Last Supper Christ prayed for this unity precisely "so that the world may believe" (Jn. 17:21).

It is therefore my hope and prayer, dear friends, that God will give you the help you need to be *instruments of the unity willed by Christ*. In the next few years, as we prepare for the dawn of the Third Christian Millennium, we must implore ever more ardently the grace of unity among all the Lord's followers (cf. John Paul II, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, 34). Only in this way, will we be able to respond to the pressing challenge facing all Christians, that of bearing witness before the world to God "whose power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think. To him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen" (Eph. 3:20-21).

Upon all of you I cordially invoke the Lord's blessings of joy and peace.

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