



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS
POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO CAPRANICA COLLEGE***

Saturday, 18 January 1997

1. I welcome you with great joy, dear students of the Capranica College, together with your former rector, the newly-ordained Bishop Luciano Pacomio, who has wished to accompany you once again to this annual meeting on the feast of your patroness, St Agnes.

I thank Your Excellency for your kind words to me and I express my deep gratitude for your service during these years in the Capranica community, which is particularly dear to the Pope because of the diligence with which for more than five centuries it has supported the formation of candidates for the priesthood and of young priests. I hope you can fruitfully dedicate to the service of the faithful of Mondovì those talents of mind and heart so appreciated by your dear students at the college.

2. I have reason to believe that the rector's episcopal ordination has instilled extra spiritual fervour in the entire community, calling everyone to reflect on the grace and demands of pastoral ministry in the Church.

Prompted by my priestly jubilee I too was invited to return to this meditation and to intensify it in recent months. The result of this reflection, made prayerfully in the sight of God, was the book *Gift and Mystery*. Today I would like to give you this witness, with the wish that you may always be full of gratitude for the priceless gift of the priesthood that the Lord has wished to offer you by calling you to be fully conformed to Christ, the High Priest and the Good Shepherd.

With the approach of the liturgical memorial of St Agnes, I invoke on each one of you and on the Capranica community the intercession of this young Roman girl. May she obtain for the former rector, who is now preparing to begin his new mission among the faithful of Mondovì, and for all

the students of your College that unconditional fidelity to Christ which was radiant in her witness as a virgin and martyr.

For my part, I wish to support you with my prayers and my Apostolic Blessing, which I willingly extend to all those who are dear to you.

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