



The Holy See

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I am pleased to greet the newly-ordained Deacons of the Pontifical North American College, together with the Rector and faculty of the College, and the many family members and friends who have come to Rome to celebrate the happy occasion of yesterday's Ordination.

Dear young men: in your service of the Church, may you always find joy in following the example of the Master, who came "not to be served but to serve" and who freely chose, in loving obedience to the will of the Father, to give his life for the salvation of the world. Assuring you of my heartfelt prayers for the fruitfulness of the ministry which has been entrusted to you. I commend you all, in the words of the Apostle Paul, "to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified".

In the years which you have devoted to discerning your vocation, each of you has come to know something of the immense power of God's word to bring wisdom, strength and peace to human hearts. In your preaching and in your pastoral service of God's people, I pray you will always be convincing witnesses of the power of his grace to bring healing and peace. What better return can you make to the Lord for all that he has given you than to share generously with others what you yourselves have received.

In a special way, too, I wish to express to the parents and family members of the new Deacons the Church's gratitude for the witness of your own faith, which has contributed in no small way to the joy of these days. May God reward all of you for the sacrifices you have made on behalf of your sons and brothers, and for the encouragement and support which you will give them in their efforts to be faithful ministers of the Church and preachers of the word of life.

Entrusting each of you to the prayers and loving protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God and Mother of the Church, I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing, which I willingly extend to all the members of your families at home.

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