



The Holy See

LETTER OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE PONTIFICAL ECCLESIASTICAL ACADEMY

Dear Brother,

At the conclusion of the work of the recent Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon Region, I expressed my wish that priests preparing for the Holy See diplomatic service dedicate one year of their formation to missionary commitment in a diocese.

I am convinced that such an experience will be helpful to all young men preparing for or beginning their priestly service, but in a particular way, to those who in the future will be called to collaborate with the Pontifical representatives and who may subsequently become Holy See envoys to nations and particular Churches.

Indeed, as I have already had the opportunity to remind the community of the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy: “The mission to which you will one day be called to carry out will take you to all parts of the world. Europe is in need of an awakening; Africa is thirsty for reconciliation; Latin America is hungry for nourishment and interiority; North America is intent on rediscovering the roots of an identity that is not defined by exclusion; Asia and Oceania are challenged by the capacity to ferment in diaspora and to dialogue with the vastness of ancestral cultures” (25 June 2015).

In order to face in a positive way, these growing challenges for the Church and the world, in addition to solid priestly and pastoral formation and the specific training offered by this Academy, future Holy See diplomats will need to gain personal experience of mission outside their diocese of origin, sharing a journey with the missionary Churches and their community, participating in their daily evangelizing activity.

I therefore turn to you, dear Brother, who recently assumed the office of President of the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy, and ask you to implement this desire of mine to enrich the formation programme with one year dedicated entirely to missionary service in the particular Churches throughout the world. This new experience will come into effect starting with the new students who will begin their formation in the coming 2020/2021 academic year.

In order to develop this project in greater depth and to proceed to a good start, close collaboration will be needed first of all with the Secretariat of State and, more precisely, with the Section for diplomatic staff of the Holy See, and the Pontifical representatives, who will certainly not fail to provide valuable help in identifying the particular Churches ready to welcome the students and will closely follow their experience.

I am certain that, after overcoming any initial concerns that may arise from this new formation style aimed at future Holy See diplomats, the missionary experience being promoted will be helpful not only to young academicians, but also to the individual Churches with whom they will collaborate and, I hope, will inspire in other priests of the universal Church the desire to make themselves available for a period of missionary service outside their own diocese.

In conclusion, entrusting to the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, this new way of forming future collaborators of the Holy See diplomatic service, I affectionately send a cordial greeting and my Apostolic Blessing to you, dear Brother, and to the entire community of the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy, asking you, please, to remember me in your prayers.

From the Vatican, 11 February 2020

Franciscus