



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY OF THE PONTIFICAL TEUTONIC INSTITUTE
OF 'SANTA MARIA DELL'ANIMA' OF ROME**

Thursday, 7 April 2022

[[Multimedia](#)]

I welcome you on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the election of Adrian VI, the second to last Pope from the Germanic world, who is buried in the church of your Pontifical College, the Institute of Santa Maria dell'Anima.

Adrian Florensz was born in Utrecht, which at the time was part of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. He received an excellent education from the University of Leuven; he was a tutor of the future emperor, Charles V; and then, after completing important religious and political tasks, he was elevated to the highest positions and created a Cardinal in 1517. When news of his election as Bishop of Rome first reached him, he hesitated, but out of a sense of duty, he ended up accepting.

In his brief Pontificate, which lasted a little more than a year, he sought above all reconciliation in the Church and the world, putting into practice Saint Paul's words, through which God entrusted the ministry of reconciliation to the Apostles (cf. 2 Cor 5:18 ff). He thus sent the Nuncio Chiericati to the Diet of Nuremberg to reconcile Luther and his followers with the Church, and to explicitly ask for forgiveness for the sins of the prelates of the Roman Curia. Courageous! Today he would have a lot of work to do!

In the political sphere, overcoming a lot of resistance, he worked to reach an agreement between the two neighbouring powers, King Francis I of France and Emperor Charles V of Habsburg, so

that, together, they could stem the increasingly menacing plans of conquest of the Ottoman army. Unfortunately, because of his premature death, Pope Adrian did not manage to finish any of these projects. Nevertheless, his witness as a fearless and tireless worker for the faith, justice and peace, remains alive in the Church's memory.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, may the example set by Pope Adrian's life and work urge you to grow in your vocation as servants of Christ. May the Lord sustain you in your ministry and lead you to a faith ever-more rooted in his love, lived out with joy and dedication. In particular, thinking about his call to promote harmony and reconciliation, I urge you to follow in his footsteps, especially in your ministry of the Sacrament of Penance. This is important: the confessor's task is to forgive, not to torture. Be merciful, great forgivers. That is how the Church wants you. This means making time to listen to confessions, and to do so correctly, with love, wisdom and a lot of mercy. But not only. This ministry also entails preaching, catechism, spiritual accompaniment, and it requires above all as always, witnessing. To be a good servant of Christ's forgiveness, a priest must know how to forgive others; he must be merciful in his relationships, a man of peace, of communion. May Our Lady help you with this.

I thank you for your visit. I wish you every good and I accompany you with my prayers and blessing. And you too, please, do not forget to pray for me, because this work is not easy! Thank you.