



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE
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Audience with seminarians from Seville, Spain

This morning, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience a group of seminarians from Seville, Spain.

The following is the text of the Pope's greeting to those present:

Greeting of the Holy Father

Dear brothers,

I am happy to welcome the communities of the Metropolitan Seminary and the “Redemptoris Mater” Seminary of Seville who, together with Archbishop José Ángel Saiz Meneses, have come on pilgrimage to the tomb of the Apostle Peter. I thank them for this visit and encourage them to live these days with wonder and gratitude for the gift of faith that the apostles passed on to us.

Our meeting is on the eve of a very significant day: Good Shepherd Sunday, which we celebrate tomorrow. You seminarians have received a calling from the Lord, and with the help of your formators you are preparing yourselves to be shepherds after the Heart of Christ.

On other occasions, I have told seminarians that this journey of configuration to Jesus the Good Shepherd must be done by taking care of four aspects: spiritual life, study, community life and apostolic activity.

This integration is necessary, I would say urgent, in order to become complete priests and to respond to the vocation received, in total dedication to God and to our brothers and sisters, especially those who suffer most. In this regard, I would like to highlight the figure of one of the many holy shepherds that this Andalusian land has had throughout history, that of Blessed Cardinal Marcelo Spínola y Maestre, with whom you are well acquainted. This Blessed, teacher of priests, said: “Virtue and knowledge are the two things that should be taught in

preference to those aspiring to the priesthood, for knowledge without virtue swells and does not edify, and virtue without knowledge edifies but does not instruct". This means, as we said, that everything in the priest - prayer, study, fraternity, mission – must go together.

Dear seminarians, make good use of this intense time of formation, with your heart in God, with open hands and a big smile to spread the joy of the Gospel to all those you meet. May Jesus bless you and the Virgin of the Kings accompany you. Thank you very much.
