

**FRIENDS OF THE SEMINARY GALA DINNER FOR
REDEMPTORIS MATER SEMINARY OF DENVER
DENVER, COLORADO
FRIDAY, JUNE 1, 2018
REMARKS OF HIS EXCELLENCY ARCHBISHOP CHRISTOPHE PIERRE
APOSTOLIC NUNCIO TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

My dear friends in Christ, it is an honor to be here with you at this Friends of the Seminary Gala Dinner to benefit the Archdiocesan Missionary Seminary *Redemptoris Mater* of Denver. I thank Archbishop Aquila for his hospitality and graciousness. I also want to thank Father Tobias Rodriguez, the Rector of the Seminary, for his gracious invitation, his kind words, and, above all, for his work, along with his collaborators, in the formation of future priests and missionaries. As the Apostolic Nuncio, the Holy Father's personal representative in the United States, I extend to all of you his warm and heartfelt greetings and wish to assure you of his spiritual closeness.

Pope John Paul II, who is sometimes described as the 'founder' of the Neo-Catechumenal Way, said that "missionary activity still represents the greatest challenge for the Church." Reflecting on these words, the Holy Father Pope Francis asked:

What would happen if we were to take these words seriously? We would realize that missionary outreach is *paradigmatic for all the Church's activity*. Along these lines the Latin American bishops stated that we "cannot passively and calmly wait in our church buildings"; we need to move "from a pastoral ministry of mere conservation to a decidedly missionary pastoral ministry." (Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 15)

I know that those of you who are part of the Way or are benefactors who support the mission have already adopted this missionary attitude, which we hope to inculcate in our future priests and really, in the whole Church. The new *Ratio Fundamentalis*, the document which guides priestly formation, reminds us that we are first and always disciples called to deepen our communion with the Master. Those called to the priesthood move from a discipleship stage to a configuration stage. During their time in seminary, men are configured more deeply to Christ the Priest and equipped to go forth on mission.

At the beginning of May, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Way in Rome, the Holy Father described what it means to Go:

Go. Mission calls for departure. But in life there is a strong temptation to linger, to avoid risks, to be content to have the situation under control. It is easier to stay home, surrounded by those who love us, but this is not Jesus' way. He sends forth: "Go". He does not use half measures. He does not authorize short transfers or reimbursed travel, but tells his disciples, all his disciples just one word: "Go". Go: a powerful call that resonates in every cranny of Christian life; a clear invitation to always go out, pilgrims in search of a brother or sister who does not yet know the joy of God's love. (Address to Members of the Neocatechumenal Way, 5 May 2018)

The fruitfulness of the Church, a Church that goes forth, depends on God's grace and, in part, on having pastors, that is, priests, shepherds willing to go to the physical and existential peripheries. Your gifts, sacrifices, and prayers help make all this possible at the Redemptoris Mater Seminary in Denver and around the world.

I thank you once more for your generosity and hospitality and commend you to the Mother of the Redeemer. May she intercede for you before her Divine Son so that you may receive "grace upon grace."

Thank you. May God bless you.