

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE CONVENTION SPONSORED BY THE
CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY ON THE 50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE
CONCILIAR DECREES "OPTATAM TOTIUS" AND "PRESBYTERORUM
ORDINIS"**
Sala Regia

20 November 2015

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[...] Closeness, the depths of mercy, a loving gaze: to experience the beauty of a life lived according to the Gospel and the love of God, which is also made concrete through his ministers. God never refuses. And here I think of the confessional. You can always find ways of giving absolution; to welcome the good. But sometimes you cannot absolve. There are priests who say: "No, because of this I cannot absolve you, go away". This is not the way. If you cannot give absolution, explain and say: "God loves you so much, God loves you. There are so many ways to reach God. I cannot give you absolution; I give you the blessing. But come back, always come back here, and whenever you come back I'll give you a blessing as a sign that God loves you". And that man or woman will go away full of joy because he found the image of the Father, who never refuses; in one way or another, he has embraced that person. [...]