



The Holy See

JOHN PAUL II

GENERAL AUDIENCE

Wednesday, 5 January 2005

Solemnity of the Epiphany

1. Dear Brothers and Sisters, I am pleased to welcome you to this first General Audience of 2005. In this holy season we contemplate the great mystery of the birth of Jesus, in whom God definitively enters history and offers salvation to men and women of all times and places.

It is precisely this universal dimension of salvation that tomorrow's Solemnity of the Epiphany celebrates: the Son of God is recognized and adored by the Magi, who represent the entire human race.

2. The good news of salvation is thus intended from the very beginning for all peoples of the world. We commend this missionary task of all Christians to Mary, Mother of the Church. We also place under her protection this new year, marked as it is by a deep concern for the sufferings which the people of South-East Asia are presently undergoing. We ask Our Lady to watch over the whole world, praying that ancient Marian hymn sung at the beginning of this Audience:

3. Loving Mother of the Redeemer,
Queen of Peace,
assist your people,
defend them from all danger,
be with the Church
on her journey to our heavenly home. Amen!

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I offer a warm welcome to all the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors present at today's Audience. I greet particularly the Vincentians from India and the groups from Australia and the United States of America. I cordially invoke upon you the joy and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ in this Christmas Season. I wish you all a happy New Year!

I also extend my greeting, as usual, to the *young people*, the *sick* and the *newly-weds*.

This day, in Europe, is dedicated to mourning the numerous victims of the tsunami that tragically struck Southeast Asia. Once again, I ask you all to join me in praying for the many deceased and for the populations in serious difficulty.

Let us pray, singing the Our Father.

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