



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II
TO JUBILEE PILGRIMS
GATHERED IN SAINT PETER'S SQUARE**

Saturday, 29 April 2000

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

1. In the climate of spiritual joy characteristic of this Octave of Easter, I greet each of you who have come from various places and have gathered in the city of Rome to celebrate the Jubilee. Your visit today also shows the intense communion that unites you with the Successor of Peter. I thank you for your witness; I thank you in particular for the kind words addressed to me in your name by Bishop Antonio Forte of Avellino, Bishop Angelo Scola, Rector Magnificent of the Lateran University, and Mr Gianfranco Gambelli and Mr Francesco Cardile, the Presidents respectively of the National Confederation of Misericordias and the "Fratres" Association of Blood Donors.

I first greet you, dear pilgrims from the Diocese of Avellino, led by your Pastor. Welcome! As I speak to you I am thinking of the priests and the consecrated men and women who faithfully live their witness and generously carry out their ministries in the Church. I am thinking of the families, young people and Christian workers who tenaciously express their fidelity to Christ in the places where Providence has placed them. I am thinking with particular affection of the unemployed, the elderly, the sick and the poor, who await understanding and support. My words of comfort, encouragement and hope to all: raise your eyes to the Risen One and persevere with renewed zeal in the building of a society that is truly worthy of man.

Fervently continue the journey of the Holy Year and strengthen the initiatives of evangelization and charity in your Diocese. May solidarity towards one another and collaboration in building the kingdom of God be the hallmark of your Ecclesial Community, gathered around the Bishop and his priests.

May families be the temple of life and love; may parishes become open, welcoming places where prayer, mutual respect and solidarity are the style and driving force of pastoral activity. In this way the entire Diocese will become a privileged place of human and spiritual development for children and adults, for young people and the elderly.

May Mary Assumed into Heaven, the patroness of your cathedral, keep you united under her motherly mantle and grant all your good desires.

2. I now greet you, dear professors and students of the Lateran University, whom I joyfully welcome on the occasion of your Jubilee, together with your Rector Magnificent and the members of the International Lateran Association, beginning with the President, Cardinal Edmund Szoka, who wanted to hold their annual Day in conjunction with this Jubilee event. My thoughts also turn to you, dear students and teachers of the academic institutions associated in various ways with the Pontifical Lateran University and with the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family. In particular, I would like to call attention to the presence here for the first time of students from Saint Petersburg, Alba Julia and Iasi, Győr, as well as from Denver and Washington.

I would also like to mention those responsible for other academic institutions associated with the *Alma Mater Lateranensis*.

Today's audience is meant as an occasion for you to repay the visit I had the pleasure of making to the Pontifical Lateran University on 16 November last. I entrusted you then with the important mission of redefining the theoretical and practical horizons of the university, which is called to broaden its universal scope in this new millennium. However, the international character of your academic institution is not enough to make it a centre of new culture and civilization. It is necessary that in all the Lateran's centres you pursue unity of research, teaching and study, building up a vital community among teachers and students. It is also important to overcome every false opposition between Christian commitment and university work, through unconditional openness to the action of the Spirit of truth, who is always the Spirit of authentic unity.

In carrying out your daily work, then, do not forget the Jubilee message, which calls us to continual conversion to the risen Lord. May Mary, Mother of the Redeemer, strengthen the bonds among all of you who belong to the great Lateran family and accompany you on the path you have taken.

3. I now extend a warm welcome to you, dear members of the Italian Federation of Misericordias, together with your President, as well as to the "Fratres" Association of Blood Donors and their President. You have gathered here to celebrate your Jubilee: I meet you with great joy.

I would like to express to you my appreciation of your efforts and, especially, of your discreet and generous work. In recent years you have endeavoured to combine your traditional tasks with that

of eliminating the causes of need through an active presence in the places where decisions are made concerning society, politics and social assistance. In these contexts you have sought to affirm Gospel values, the heritage inspiring your work and the irreplaceable guarantee of respect for human dignity. A particular expression of the zeal that motivates you is also your active presence in Kosovo, your commitment to building the Diocesan Missionary Centre in Taiwan, and the welcome gift of two ambulances which you have offered me today. With these generous signs of solidarity you enable the suffering to experience the providential mercy of the Lord. Continue, dear friends, in your shining tradition of good works, which spurs you to expand the horizons of your charity.

4. I extend a cordial greeting to both groups from German-speaking areas who are present at this audience: the pilgrims from the Austrian Cartel Association and a group of members of the German *Bundestag*. Although you come from different countries and have set yourselves different goals, you are nevertheless united by a common purpose: you wish to be the voice of Christian faith in society. May passing through the Holy Door give you the strength and courage to work as salt and leaven for the world. I impart my Apostolic Blessing to you all.

I affectionately greet the faithful from St Francis Borgia Parish in Madrid. As I thank you for your visit, I hope that the Lord will fill you with an abundance of his gifts in this Jubilee Year, in which you have had the joy of passing through the Holy Door.

5. Lastly, I greet the other groups and individual pilgrims here. A special greeting goes to the faithful of St John the Baptist Parish in Albegno di Treviolo (Bergamo), to the parish community of the Blessed Virgin Mary Mediatrix of All Graces in Favara (Agrigento), to the members of the Italian Institute of Castles, Puglia Section, to the religious and seminarians of the St Charles of Buccinigo d'Erba Institute (Como) of the Don Orione Work. I entrust all of you to Mary, Mother of the risen Christ, on Saturday, the day particularly dedicated to her, as I impart a special Apostolic Blessing to you and your families.