



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II TO VARIOUS PILGRIM GROUPS

Saturday, 2 December 2000

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

1. During your Jubilee pilgrimage you wished to show your affection and your spiritual closeness to the Successor of Peter. Thank you, dear friends, for this sign of communion. I extend my cordial welcome to each of you who have come from various places.

I first greet Bishop Salvatore Boccaccio of Frosinone-Veroli-Ferentino, and the large group of pilgrims led by him. I thank him for the kind words with which he wished to remember the reasons for this diocesan pilgrimage. Together with him I greet the entire diocesan community: the priests, men and women religious, seminarians, young people, the laity involved in the apostolate and the representatives of the various municipalities that form the civil structure of the diocesan territory. I ask you, dear faithful from the Ciociaria, to bring my greeting to those who were unable to be present today.

In your Diocese you have prepared a five-year plan for the formation of priests, consecrated persons and the laity, in order to initiate a "pastoral conversion" that will educate everyone in a renewed commitment to their parishes. The pastoral letter of your Bishop has just been published today, encouraging you to implement a united evangelization to involve every section of the ecclesial community. In welcoming the Gospel into his life, a Christian cannot fail to do everything in his power to accomplish the Lord's plan in his surroundings: once evangelized, he evangelizes others. If he opens his heart to Christ, he will know how to be the living sign of his love for others.

2. As a renewed proclamation of the newness of life in Christ, the new evangelization intends to help everyone to understand that God's law is a law of freedom and joy for total personal fulfilment. Everyone, from priests to catechists, from parents to children, from consecrated persons

to married people, is responsible for repropounding to the world the ever timely message of Christ, who died and rose again for us. This proclamation must resound with deep ardour through an evangelization that is open to everyone and is new in its method and presentation.

Dear brothers and sisters, the Lord calls you to this difficult but exalting mission. He does not abandon you. Through the grace of frequently received sacraments, intense personal prayer and heartfelt adherence to the Magisterium, you can grow spiritually and your Ecclesial Community will advance in fidelity to its Lord. Continue on this path, in full unity among yourselves and in close communion with your zealous Pastor.

3. A cordial greeting goes to you, dear members of the *Circolo San Pietro* and the Sts Peter and Paul Association. You wanted jointly to celebrate your Jubilee with your co-workers and relatives. I wish to express my sincere gratitude to your chaplains, dear Archbishop Ettore Cunial and Mons. Franco Follo. I urge each of you to continue the praiseworthy work carried out by your respective associations. For my part, I am grateful for your constant and silent service to me personally and to my universal Petrine ministry.

Today's meeting offers me the opportunity to say again that your two associations have an important mission to carry out in the Church: a mission of total fidelity to the Gospel and of generous service to your brothers and sisters in need. May these two aspects - personal conversion to Christ and service to one's neighbour - always be present in your activity. May you be apostles of the Gospel in your families and, thanks also to a programme of ongoing ascetical and pastoral formation, may you grow in awareness of your vocation. May the Lord make you ever more attentive listeners to his saving word, so that it may become the daily bread of your spiritual and missionary growth.

4. I am now particularly pleased to address a cordial welcome to each of you, distinguished members of the "*Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice*" Foundation, who have gathered here with your families. Today's meeting is happily being held during the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, which for you too marks a special occasion of grace and a valuable encouragement to renew your generous commitment to the service of the social Magisterium and the charity of the Supreme Pontiff. I greet Archbishop Agostino Cacciavillan, President of the Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See, and I sincerely thank him for his kind words expressing the devotion for the Pope that characterizes the members of this foundation. Also present at this meeting is Cardinal Francis Arinze, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, whom I greet with affection. In addition, I greet Archbishop Claudio Celli, Secretary of APSA, your national assistants and all the clergy present, who share in the commitment and hopes of this worthy association.

At the end of a year rich in extraordinary events for the life of the Church and the world, I wish to express my appreciation of the contribution made by your foundation to a deeper understanding of the Church's Magisterium in the service of justice and peace. As Archbishop Agostino Cacciavillan

recalled, this contribution was highlighted first of all during the celebration of the foundation's Jubilee on 27 February last and by the significant participation in the Jubilee for the World of Work, which took place on 1 May at Tor Vergata. You prepared for that Jubilee by organizing an important international convention on "Ethics and Finance", whose final document you wished to present to me today. This represents your contribution to identifying just and feasible ways to give practical expression to the primacy of the human person and the common good in the financial and administrative field.

While I hope that your foundation will offer ever more skilled support to the mission of evangelization and human development of the Church and of the Apostolic See, I entrust your every intention and activity to the protection of the One who gave birth in the flesh to the Son of the eternal Father and who, at the foot of the cross, was given to us as our Mother.

5. My thoughts turn now to the educational community of the minor seminary of Altamura-Gravina-Acquaviva delle Fonti, to the teachers, professors, students and relatives who are accompanying them. Dear friends, may this be a helpful occasion for entrusting your projects to the Lord. The Church expects much from you. Take care to cultivate a lifestyle that is always in keeping with the Gospel, joyful in faith and ready to serve others. Prepare to bear eloquent witness among all to an obedient love for the divine Master, who guides everyone on the paths of peace and joy.

6. I now turn affectionately to you, members of the National Association of Professional Scuba-Divers, who came to visit me on the occasion of your Jubilee. Thank you for your presence. I was very touched by the symbolic gesture that you intend making on this occasion. As a testimony to the celebration of your Jubilee, you have asked me to bless a statue portraying Christ of the Depths. You will submerge this image of the Redeemer in the waters of Giglio Island in memory of the deceased members of your brave profession. May the Lord always protect you and grant you the necessary graces for your life.

7. I cordially greet the pilgrims from Billancourt in France, who have come to celebrate the Jubilee. Dear friends, may you be able to strengthen your faith and to live your Christian mission with renewed spirit! With my Apostolic Blessing!

I cordially greet the group of Croatian Jesuits. Dear friends, may this pilgrimage to the tombs of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul during the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 further encourage your service in the cause of the Gospel. May you be accompanied in this effort by my Apostolic Blessing. Praised be Jesus and Mary!

8. Lastly, I greet the large group of lawyers from Bari. Thank you, dear friends, for your visit. May the Lord assist you in your difficult mission of serving justice and the common good. I also greet the Union of Small Landowners, the members of the Chianti League, the participants in the seminar offered by the General Management of the Anti-Drug Services; the employees and

partners of the Bank of Salerno, the Chamber of Commerce of Milano-UnionCamere, the employees of the University of Messina, the Italian Association of Hotel Employees, the Fogolars Furlans of Switzerland, as well as the pilgrims from numerous Italian parishes who have gathered here.

I hope, dear brothers and sisters, that you will spend this time of grace by drawing abundantly from the love of God, who sustains believers in their efforts to bear a consistent Christian witness wherever they work. On this First Saturday of December, I entrust everyone here to the protection of Mary, as I cordially bless you all.

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