



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL
AND CIVIL ORGANIZATIONS
WHICH COORDINATED THE HOLY YEAR EVENTS**

Thursday, 11 January 2001

*Your Eminences, Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate and the Priesthood,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,*

1. Today I am particularly pleased to welcome you who, in your various capacities, have helped with the preparation and celebration of the Holy Year, which has had vast repercussions in the Church and the world.

Moving images, which in a way epitomize its various phases, remain deeply impressed on my mind - as I am sure they do for you as well. I am thinking in particular of this final period, and I see again the never-ending streams of pilgrims crossing St Peter's Square, on their way with deep devotion to pass through the Holy Door. How can we forget this living image of the People of God on its way to Christ, the universal Way of salvation?

Those motivated and patient crowds also prompted thoughts of those who followed Jesus, leading him to preach without pause, and one day to work the famous miracle of the multiplication of the loaves, a sign of that "bread of life" which he would later give the world (cf. *Jn 6: 35, 48*). These crowds were a tangible sign of the deep desire that spurs man to seek truth and mercy, hope and reconciliation, in a word, to seek Christ.

Now that the Holy Door has been closed, we have returned to our "ordinary" routine, knowing that access to divine mercy is open wider than ever. Repeating the words of the Apostle Paul, we can say that in the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, "the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of

all men" (*Ti* 2: 11), and "the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared" (*Ti* 3: 4).

In the historical transition that humanity is undergoing, this Holy Year has had the providential role of making the "Good News" echo anew throughout the world. "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (*Jn* 3: 16). At the beginning of the 21st century and the *third millennium, the Jubilee has pointed to Christ, the one salvation and hope of humanity*, as the secure point from which to set out anew.

2. For all this we must thank God, as we have already thanked him especially at the solemn celebration for the closing of the Jubilee. However, in addition to thanking God, we must also thank men and women. This meeting gives me the pleasant opportunity to *express once again my heartfelt thanks* to each of you and to the organizations you represent. In various areas you have contributed to the success of each stage of the Jubilee journey with your effective collaboration.

Through the Cardinal President and the Secretary, I would like first of all to express my deep gratitude to the members of the Central Committee for the Great Jubilee: the Cardinals, Bishops, priests, religious and lay people. They have been involved in many areas: from theological-pastoral planning to hospitality services, to liturgy and spiritual guidance, to information, assistance and administration. It has been a fruitful and intense experience of labour and communion, in which each person worked in close collaboration with the other members of the offices and agencies of the Holy See and Vatican City State, with the Vicariate of Rome as well as with many other civil institutions.

Here I would like to mention with gratitude the close cooperation with the Italian Government, through the Joint Italian-Vatican Commission and the Extraordinary Commissariat, appropriately set up for the Jubilee. I am thinking of the constant contribution made by the Lazio Region, by the Province, and in a very special way, by the Municipality of Rome. The service of the various security forces, coordinated by the Ministry of the Interior, was attentive and painstaking, as always. Gratitude is also due to the Ministry of Public Works for having suitably coordinated the creation of important infrastructures and carrying out other projects, which will remain for the city of Rome and the nation now that the Jubilee is over.

I also recall the activity of the Roman Agency for the Jubilee and the great number of volunteers: theirs was a friendly and surprising presence which Rome will never forget. We also applaud the companies, banking institutions and other firms whose contributions made it possible to meet the many financial needs and to help the poorer pilgrims during their journey and stay in Rome. I repeat my heartfelt thanks to *L'Osservatore Romano*, to the Vatican Television Centre, to Vatican Radio and to the RAI for their professionalism and readiness to report and broadcast the Jubilee events, utilizing the help of many experts and the constant support of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications.

One could certainly add to the list of people to thank. Through those of you here, I would like to reach everyone - really everyone - who worked for the Great Jubilee. I also ask those who generously made their own spiritual contribution through prayer and suffering - the elderly, the sick and contemplative religious - to continue this precious mission, so that the seeds sown during the Jubilee may continue to produce abundant fruit in the years to come.

3. We have now returned to the way of "ordinary time". You, who have been required to make an extra effort during this period, are returning to your usual activities. Yet, in a certain sense, *nothing is the same as it was before*. For the Jubilee Year has impressed on each person, and especially on you, a *"style" of life and work* that must not be abandoned.

On 6 January last a precious legacy was entrusted to us and should be handed on to future generations, in accordance with two governing principles. First of all, we must continue to *keep Christ at the centre* of our personal and social life. If we have truly lived the Jubilee, this will be apparent from the *fruits of holiness* that we will bear in our ordinary lives.

In the second place, we must *bear witness everywhere to charity*, which becomes forgiveness, service, availability and sharing. Paraphrasing the Gospel, we could say: "By this they will know that you have made the Jubilee, from how you love one another".

This is the mission I entrust to you, dear brothers and sisters, as I again express my gratitude to each and every one. May Mary, Star of the third millennium, accompany you and guide every step of your life. I wish you all good things and cordially bless you and your loved ones.