



The Holy See

VISIT TO THE ST. PAUL'S MEMORIAL - DAMASCUS

REMARKS OF THE HOLY FATHER

Monday, 7 May 2001

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I greet the Franciscans of the Custody of the Holy Land, who are responsible for managing this house, and the women religious and lay people who are here today. I am pleased to commemorate the Apostle Paul with you, in this house desired by Pope Paul VI to gather the treasure of faith, spirituality and missionary enthusiasm of the Apostle of the Gentiles, who, on the road to Damascus, accepted to welcome the light of Christ. Having found the whole truth, the Apostle Paul first lived three days in silence and in the darkness of faith before being baptized, discovering the local Christian community and setting out to proclaim the Gospel. The centre's vocation is to present the Pauline spirituality to the men and women who want to pause a moment in their Christian life, in order to live more fully their baptismal life and vocation in the Church. The Apostle Paul reminds us that the mission is born in the acceptance of the light of Christ, from whom comes the whole revelation, in silent and loving contemplation of the divine mysteries and the humble, trusting acceptance of the mission entrusted to them by the Church.

May those who benefit from the spiritual space offered by this house walk every day in the footprints of the Apostle of the Gentiles! With my Apostolic Blessing.