



The Holy See

SIXTH EXTRAORDINARY CONSISTORY

REMARKS OF THE HOLY FATHER

Monday 21 May 2001

"Grace be with you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ"

(Rom 1: 7). With these words of the Apostle Paul, I greet each of you and offer a most cordial welcome.

I warmly thank Cardinal Bernardin Gantin, Dean of the Sacred College, for being the interpreter of your common sentiments. His were kind and deferential expressions not only in the name of those present, but also of those who, though unable to be with us physically, are united by their prayer to our common task of these days, a task which makes visible the communion existing between the Successor of Peter and the Cardinals, his first and closest collaborators. The make up of our assembly which brings together Cardinals coming from every part of the earth and belonging to a wide variety of cultures, represents the unity, universality and missionary nature of the Church, as she moves towards new apostolic goals.

2. The meeting, which begins this morning, is important and is spiritually connected with the Jubilee, whose echo is still alive among us. While I recall with gratitude the different moments and numerous celebrations which we lived together during the Holy Year, I pray that the Spirit of the Lord, who allowed us to live such extraordinary events, may continue to guide and help us select the challenges emerging at the beginning of the new era. In the Apostolic Letter *Novo millennio ineunte*, whose signing I made part of the solemn closing of the Jubilee, I emphasized the need to bring to your attention a number of practical suggestions for the Church's mission of evangelization at the dawn of the new millennium. It is a question of laying out the Church's chief missionary priorities and studying the most suitable methods and means of achieving them. We must pay great attention to the superlative formation and intelligent assignment of our priests and lay collaborators because the field of apostolic action before us is vast and complex.

However, we know that, while our commitment is indispensable, everything depends on God's action. If that is so, the primary effort of every believer and ecclesial community can only be that of striving for holiness, the passionate seeking of God and the loving contemplation of His face.

3. Venerable brothers, in these days we have a chance to listen to each other's experiences and reflections. We can confront each other fraternally about pastoral problems and challenges. We can try to decipher the direction that will help us become the credible sign of God's love for every human person. Above all, we can pray and be docile to the Holy Spirit and his inspirations, realizing that the entire People of God are united with us in prayer as they were at the beginning of the Church. We realize that our heavenly Father keeps sending us to be at their service.

May Mary, Mother of the Church and Star of Evangelization, accompany us as she accompanied the Apostles in the Cenacle. In her maternal hands I want to place the work of the Extraordinary Consistory and the pastoral and spiritual fruits we hope to derive from it for the good of the Church and of the world.