



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO THE 31ST SQUADRON OF THE ITALIAN AIR FORCE***

Saturday, 8 January 2005

Dear Crew members of the 31st Squadron of the Italian Air Force,

I welcome you with joy and greet you with affection! I greet in particular your Chief of Staff and thank him for his kind words on your behalf. I very gladly reciprocate with my warmest good wishes to you for the New Year that has just begun: may it be a serene and prosperous year for you all!

In 2005, the Church will continue to contemplate the mystery of the Eucharist, "the living bread which came down from heaven" (Jn 6: 51) for our salvation. This bread of eternal life is Christ, the wellspring of our hope and the source of love from which gifts of justice, forgiveness and peace are constantly poured out upon the world. Let us experience the riches of this mystery, dear friends, especially by taking part in Holy Mass on Sundays, which for Christians is the centre and culmination of the week.

This is the hope that I express as I invoke the motherly protection of the Virgin Mary upon you and your families. On this occasion, I am also particularly eager to express my gratitude once again for the generous and special cooperation that you offer me in my pastoral ministry.

With these sentiments, I cordially impart my Blessing to you all.

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