



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI TO THE MEMBERS OF THE FOUNDATION FOR THE SAHEL

Monday, 20 February 2006

Dear Friends of the John Paul II Foundation for the Sahel,

I am happy to welcome you and all those who collaborate in the various activities of the Foundation. I greet in particular Bishop Jean-Pierre Bassène of Kolda in Senegal, President of the Council of Administration.

The John Paul II Foundation for the Sahel was born from the solidarity of the faithful, especially in Germany, who responded generously to the appeal that my Venerable Predecessor launched from Ouagadougou on behalf of the peoples of the Sahel who were then facing the consequences of a dramatic drought.

Entrusted to the responsibility of the Bishops of the Countries concerned to fight the desertification of this African region, the Foundation has fully developed as a charitable work of the Church. Through the numerous projects that it has supported and implemented for more than 20 years it expresses that love of neighbour, which is a responsibility for each member of the faithful but also for the entire ecclesial community (cf. *Deus Caritas Est*, n. 20) and must be expressed in concrete gestures.

I encourage you to pursue with determination and with the active support of the Pontifical Council *Cor Unum* this work of Christian brotherhood, which is a service to the whole person and contributes to interreligious dialogue as well as to the revelation of God's love for the inhabitants of this earth. Thus, it is an integral part of evangelizing action.

As I entrust you to the intercession of the Virgin Mary, Queen of Africa, I cordially impart a special and affectionate Apostolic Blessing to you and to all the collaborators of the Foundation and Peoples of the Sahel.

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