



The Holy See

MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II TO BISHOP VASCO GIUSEPPE BERTELLI OF THE DIOCESE OF VOLTERRA

To my Venerable Brother

The Most Reverend Vasco Giuseppe Bertelli

Bishop of Volterra learned with great satisfaction that this Diocese is preparing to commemorate with special celebrations the Pastoral Visit that I had the joy of making 10 years ago to the ancient and noble city of Volterra. I have a vivid and joyful memory of the warm welcome I received from the Volterra community, the various meetings I had with the faithful and the citizens, and the strong witness of faith by which Volterra honours its rich Christian heritage. I hope that the heartfelt commemoration of that happy day may lead this Diocese to strengthen the exceptional bonds of ecclesial communion linking it with Rome since the dawn of Christianity, that is, from the time when Providence called St Linus Martyr, according to an ancient tradition in Volterra, to be the immediate successor of the Apostle Peter as head of the Church of Rome. I sincerely hope that the Church of Volterra may preserve and continue to foster this long tradition of apostolic faith and of spiritual closeness to the See of Peter. Venerable and dear Brother, I wish to reaffirm today the exhortation I made 10 years ago during my visit: "My wish is that this Church of Volterra may truly be a family: God's family" (*Address to representatives of the local Church*, 23 September 1989; *L'Osservatore Romano*, 9 October 1989, p. 11). With the active contribution of all its members, may this diocesan community truly experience an ever deeper life of communion - a family life - to bear effective witness at the close of this century to the message of salvation and to cross the threshold of the third millennium inwardly renewed and ready to face the challenges of the new evangelization. With these wishes, as I entrust the joys and hopes, the intentions and commitments of the beloved Church of Volterra to the heavenly intercession of Our Lady, particularly revered in your ancient cathedral, and to that of St Linus Martyr, patron of the Diocese, I affectionately impart my Apostolic Blessing to you, Venerable Brother, to the clergy, to the consecrated persons and to the entire community of Volterra. *From Castel Gandolfo, 23 September 1999, feast of St Linus, Pope and Martyr.* **JOHN PAUL II**