



The Holy See

**LETTER OF JOHN PAUL II
TO CARDINAL EDMUND SZOKA
PRESIDENT OF THE PONTIFICAL COMMISSION
FOR VATICAN CITY STATE**

To My Venerable Brother

Cardinal EDMUND SZOKA

President of the Pontifical Commission for Vatican City State

As you prepare to travel to the United States of America for the solemn inauguration of the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center in Washington, I ask you kindly to convey my greetings and good wishes to all gathered for this happy occasion. I send a special word of appreciation to Cardinal Adam Maida and the members of the Board, to the distinguished religious and civil leaders in attendance, and to those who have helped to make this significant pastoral undertaking a reality. In her proclamation of the Gospel, the Church has always engaged in dialogue with the cultures which give historical expression to man's deepest aspirations to truth, freedom and fulfillment. In a world of increasing religious and cultural pluralism, this dialogue represents an essential source of genuine enrichment, as it brings to bear on the realities of the dawning millennium the treasures of thought and experience contained in the Church's tradition of two thousand years. The Pope John Paul II Cultural Center is inspired by the conviction that only the mystery of Jesus Christ sheds full light on the mystery of man and can provide a sure foundation for the authentic progress of the human family in justice, peace and solidarity. For it is the Incarnate Son of the Father who fully reveals man to himself and discloses humanity's sublime vocation in God's saving plan (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 22).

From the beginning of my Pontificate, I have sought to foster a fruitful and creative dialogue between faith and culture. I am grateful therefore that the new Center was planned as a means of introducing its visitors to Catholic cultural life, and as a place of study and reflection on themes related to the religious and humanitarian mission which the Church is called to carry forward at the dawn of the Third Millennium. It is my prayer that the Center's intellectual, artistic and cultural activity will show the power of faith to illuminate human history and experience, and help many to discover more fully the beauty of the Gospel vision of man and his transcendent destiny. May all who visit the Center come to know the joyful hope which is the gift of God's Spirit and the support of all who strive to build a world ever more worthy of the human family.

With these sentiments, I congratulate all who have made possible the John Paul II Cultural Center, and I entrust to the loving protection of Mary Immaculate, Patroness of the United States of America, its programs and activities. To all present at the opening ceremonies I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of joy and peace in the Lord.

From the Vatican, February 8, 2001

IOANNES PAULUS II

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