



The Holy See

MESSAGE OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE BISHOPS AND FRIENDS OF THE FOCOLARE MOVEMENT

Venerable Brothers, 1. I joyfully extend my cordial greeting to each of you, Bishops and Friends of the Focolare Movement, who are taking part in the 22nd Ecumenical Congress which, in light of the tragic events of the past days, has been transferred from Istanbul to Rocca di Papa. Although you will be unable to visit the venerable Church of St Andrew in Constantinople, you will nevertheless be warmly received at the Church of Sts Peter and Paul in Rome and offered hospitality reserved for brothers in Christ. 2. The programme of your annual meeting is centred on the Sacred Scripture phrase: "You are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3: 28). You are dealing with a theme more current than ever: it can provide a legitimate response to the serious rifts that plague today's world. Your Congress can strengthen you in the ecumenical duty to hasten on the road towards that full unity for which Jesus prayed to the Father and for which he offered his very life! You know well that Christian unity is dear to my heart and as such, from the beginning of my Pontificate, has received my constant attention. 3. I repeat to you, dear Brothers in the Episcopate, what I recently wrote to the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity: "The force of love impels us towards one another and prepares us for listening, dialogue, conversion and renewal (cf. *Unitatis Redintegratio*, n. 1)". And again: "Only an intense ecumenical spirituality, lived in docility to Christ and fully open to the promptings of the Spirit, will help us live with the necessary dynamism this interim period in which we must sum up our progress and our defeats, with the lights and the shadows on our journey of reconciliation" (*Message*, 3 November 2003; *L'Osservatore Romano* English edition, 3 December, p. 6). 4. With fraternal affection I encourage you in the apostolic work you have undertaken and, while I assure you of my prayers for your pastoral activities, I impart a special Apostolic Blessing to you all, which I gladly extend to Ms Chiara Lubich, who has welcomed you, and to those who are part of the Focolare Movement Centre. *From the Vatican, 25 November 2003*

JOHN PAUL II
