



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
IN MEMORY OF THE DECEASED SECRETARY OF STATE,
CARDINAL GIOVANNI VILLOT
AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE LENTEN RETREAT***

Saturday, 10 March 1979

Before expressing my thanks at the end of the retreat, I wish to manifest my deep sorrow on the death of Cardinal Giovanni Villot, Secretary of State, who was dear to all of us.

Although his illness began about two weeks ago, his death came as an unforeseen blow. When worrying news began to arrive from the "Gemelli" hospital where he had been taken last Monday, I went immediately to visit him and I assured him of our united prayers during this retreat. Those prayers continue now to accompany him, in the fervent confidence that Christ the Lord will reward his faithful servant, to whom were entrusted such high responsibilities in the Church.

I personally am deeply grateful to him for having been willing to collaborate with me in this first difficult period of my pontificate. And I should add that, while accepting completely what the Lord has disposed, I feel a very great sorrow for the death of the man who was my closest collaborator.

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