



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER
POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO THE ROYAL NAVAL CHAPLAINS,
OFFICERS AND MEN OF "HMS SCYLLA"**

Saturday 20 February, 1988

Dear Friends,

I am very pleased to welcome all of you today: the Royal Naval Chaplains and those taking part in your ecumenical pilgrimage, as well as the officers and men of HMS Scylla presently docked at Naples. I am happy that it has been possible to arrange this meeting in response to your desire to see the Pope.

Whether you are on pilgrimage or simply on a brief visit, I hope that your stay in Rome, with its many past and present testimonies to Christian faith, will enable you to reflect on the role that Almighty God plays in your lives. May he strengthen and confirm your faith, especially during this Lenten season, so that you may celebrate this coming Easter with minds and hearts renewed. May he also hear the prayers of Christians everywhere who long to see overcome the obstacles to unity that prevent us from celebrating the Lord's Resurrection in full communion with one another.

At his time you are dedicated to the service of your country in the armed forces. You should look upon yourselves not only as custodians of the security freedom of your countrymen, but also as servants of peace (Cfr. *Gaudium et Spes*, 79). World peace begins with peace in our own hearts, founded on a right relationship with God and neighbour. We are commanded to love God above all things and our neighbour as ourselves. Only in this way can we hope to experience in any meaningful and lasting way the peace for which the world yearns. Justice and mercy must be our guides in promoting the good of others, both within the humble routine of everyday life and in the great affairs of nations and peoples.

I wish to assure you of my prayers for all your loved ones, especially those who may be in special need of God's help. Upon them and all of you I invoke an abundance of divine blessings.

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