



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E. FRANCESCO RUTELLI,
MAYOR OF ROME**

Mr Mayor,

I would like to congratulate you on the day when Rome solemnly recalls the anniversary of its foundation. This significant event, which according to tradition occurred 2,750 years ago, cannot leave indifferent the one who has his seat in Rome and therefore has a vital, daily relationship with this city.

In addressing you, the city's chief magistrate, I intend affectionately to greet the entire population of Rome and all those who administer and represent it. It is the birthday of Rome: our Rome of the millenniums and of today, of the Latin and Christian civilizations, which is looking to the future and determined to remain faithful to its heritage of lofty civil and spiritual tradition.

Today's anniversary occurs during the first year of preparation for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000. Rome is committed to preparing itself in such a way as to offer the world the concrete image of caput mundi which characterizes it.

The remaining years of the century in which we are living, with its lights and shadows, are certainly a providential opportunity for Rome to renew its mission of peace and solidarity, in the awareness of its own vocation as a crossroads of culture and faith.

Down the millenniums the city has always been open and welcoming to everyone. Even when it had to endure hard times, it was able to rely on its age-old energies and the noblest values of its history, to be reborn and thus continue to bestow its gifts of civilization and spirituality on visitors from every part of the world.

The many problems it now has to face are new challenges which must motivate its commitment to

the loftiest goals of humanity and common brotherhood. This will happen particularly through the patient and courageous service of its administrators, called to work with a sense of responsibility to make the city ever more welcoming to all who knock at her doors, especially those who are deprived of work, a dignified home or adequate assistance. It is a demanding mission which, if supported by the contribution of all the citizens, will redound to the benefit of the younger generations, to whom it will guarantee a civil, moral and spiritual heritage capable of sustaining them on their journey. The diocesan community, for its part, will not fail to give its own particular support by continuing, as in the past, to make every possible contribution to the city's progress and to the human and spiritual well-being of all its residents.

Mr Mayor, in expressing the hope that this anniversary will encourage the further growth of the whole Roman community, so dear to me, I invoke upon it the intercession of Mary most holy, *Salus Populi Romani*, and of the Apostles Peter and Paul, its heavenly patrons. As I await the opportunity to ascend that historic hill in person to pay homage to the city, I send you and your co-workers my blessing and greeting.

From the Vatican, 21 April 1997.

IOANNES PAULUS PP. II

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