



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER
TO THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ACEA
FOR THE BASILICA'S NEW EXTERIOR LIGHTING SYSTEM**

Friday, 17 December 1999

*Your Eminence,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,*

1. I extend my cordial greeting to all of you. I am very pleased to welcome you this evening, when we have the joy of inaugurating the new lighting system of St Peter's Basilica.

In particular, I greet and thank Cardinal Virgilio Noè, who has expressed the sentiments you share and has explained to me all the work completed and the results achieved. I greet the President of the ACEA, Dr Fulvio Vento, and the Managing Director, Dr Paolo Cuccia, to whom I also express my gratitude for their courteous words. With them I greet the representatives of the Board of Directors accompanied by their relatives and friends.

2. After the exacting restoration work which recently returned the façade to its original splendour, today another project is being completed to enhance this basilica, dear to all the Catholic world.

The imminent Jubilee of the Year 2000 spurred those in charge of the Fabric of St Peter's to think of an important project that would allow pilgrims and visitors to appreciate the beauty of this church even at night.

The new illumination of the façade, the drum, the dome, the smaller domes and the lantern was made a reality by the ACEA, using modern means and special equipment to accentuate the features which, precisely because of their form, make this sacred building unique in the world. In addition, the excellent solution adopted reduces the amount of energy used by about 40 per cent and, at the same time, considerably lessens light pollution, since the floodlights are shielded by

the architectural elements.

The faithful who will come to Rome to pray at the tomb of the Apostle Peter and pass through the Holy Door to obtain the Jubilee indulgence will also be able to admire the whole complex of St Peter's and appreciate the worth of each architectural feature at night.

3. May the new illumination that bathes the basilica in light and shows all its impressiveness be an invitation to pilgrims and visitors to welcome into their lives Christ who is the Light of the world.

May it be a further incentive for believers to give proof in their lives of their fidelity to God and to the Church.

I congratulate everyone who had an active part in installing this new lighting system: the designers, the project directors, the technicians and the workmen. My grateful admiration goes to every one for the work achieved with competence and dedication.

As I invoke abundant gifts of serenity and peace from Christ, who became man for our sake 2,000 years ago, I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing to each of you and to your families.