



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II AT THE END OF THE LENTEN SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

Saturday, 27 February 1999

At the end of the spiritual exercises, we thank God who has spoken to us in silence as he did to the prophet Elijah. I share this deep sentiment of gratitude first of all with our preacher, Bishop André-Mutien Léonard of Namur, who has been the Lord's docile and effective instrument during these days devoted to listening.

I cordially thank you for your efforts in preparing and directing these spiritual exercises. Through them we were immersed as it were in the mystery of the eternal Trinity, "man's viaticum on the way to the third millenium". You prepared an authentic biblical journey for us, enriched with the voices of saints and spiritual masters. You also let Soloviev speak to us, quoting the texts with the words of the "Antichrist": a powerful moment. We were thus able to contemplate the face of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, starting from the heart of New Testament Revelation. In this way, we were helped to synthesize the theological content of the three years of immediate preparation for the Great Jubilee, now close at hand. *Tertio millennio adveniente* was appropriately quoted many times. Dear preacher, may the Lord reward you for these efforts! Now accept another task. We would really like to have the text. I even wrote in my notes that we are expecting the text, because it was impossible to write by hand everything you said. There were very powerful, original moments: for example, this idea about the confession of Christ.

I would like to express my gratitude to those who have joined me during these days. To all the Roman Curia, first, to you, Brother Cardinals, to the Bishops and officials of the Curia, to you who have directly shared this time of grace, and to all who have been close to us in prayer. I hope that the Lenten journey will bring everyone abundant spiritual fruits and, above all, that everyone will grow in love, which "binds everything together in perfect harmony" (Col 3:14).

May Mary, who has accompanied us with her motherly protection during these days of prayer,

reflection and silence, make our intentions fruitful and guide us towards the total fulfilment of the divine will in our lives: *Maria, Spes nostra, salve!* Let us conclude by singing the *Pater Noster* and then I will give you my Blessing.

Have a good Lent!