



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II TO THE ITALIAN AND UKRAINIAN PILGRIMS

Saturday 27 May 2000

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

1. Welcome to Rome, where you have come for your Jubilee pilgrimage. Here you intend to strengthen your profession of faith by drawing abundantly from the sources of grace which God, rich in mercy, lavishes on his children with particular intensity in this Holy Year.

First of all, I welcome the pilgrims from the Diocese of Pozzuoli. I greet Bishop Silvio Padoin, your Pastor, and I thank him for his respectful words to me on your behalf. Your presence reminds me in a way of the visit I had the joy of making to your city 10 years ago. Thank you for the sentiments you have expressed to me this morning. In addressing you and your Pastor, I would like to express again my closeness and encouragement to all the members of the diocesan community whom you represent.

You are members of an ancient Church visited by the Apostle Paul, who traveled to Rome under armed escort. The very thoughtful welcome shown to those travelers of the Gospel has continued unaltered down the centuries in the characteristic warmth of the people of Pozzuoli. Their hospitality, their willingness to be seriously challenged by the Gospel and their heartfelt concern in assisting the needy are values that have been handed down to you as a legacy and which you must also foster as an essential feature of your fidelity to Christ.

2. Faithful to the Gospel, your people in the past two millennia have preserved the faith and the bond of communion with the Head of the Apostolic College. Nothing has ever weakened this fidelity: neither difficulties nor suffering, neither obstacles nor even the natural disasters - volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, bradyseisms - which have struck your land.

After passing through the Holy Door, your community now intends to pursue its journey. Continue to bear witness with trust. The history of holiness written by the Church of Pozzuoli in these 2,000 years, as your Bishop recalled, is a strong incentive to continue to devote yourselves generously to missionary work. Accompany every apostolic initiative with the tireless work of human development, so that Christ's message will reach the roots. Vast are the areas that need your intervention. I am thinking of the phenomenon of unemployed youth, who are very numerous in your region and throughout southern Italy. Do all you can to instil trust in those who want to find their place in society's productive process. By doing so, you will help to inspire serenity in their hearts and in their families.

3. I know that the rapid urban development which has affected the whole Phlegraean region makes exacting demands on the formation of a community that is cohesive, welcoming, open to solidarity and steadfast in its ancient traditions of faith and charity. In all your actions may it be your concern to create a favourable climate for an orderly civil society that respects the rights and duties of each person.

Here I would like to repeat to you what I said during the visit to your city that I mentioned above: "Try to react courageously without giving in to passive resignation, which extinguishes all potential inner resources. Do not take it for granted that the situation can never change. Think above all of the young people and their future; insist in all legitimate ways that the authorities not let you down. And be aware that one can only build a city worthy of man if a generous contribution is made by all" (*Insegnamenti*, XIII/2, 1133).

4. I am sure the pastoral visit which your Bishop is about to conclude in the various parts of the Diocese, and for which I wish every success, will make a decisive contribution to the greater effectiveness of this apostolic work. It will help you make every effort so that no one will be deprived of the liberating proclamation of the Good News of Christ. Accompany your every pastoral action with many prayers. The Lord will not fail to make your efforts bear fruit.

A great hope in this regard is the increase in priestly ordinations, which have strengthened and rejuvenated the presbyterate, and the promising presence of many seminarians. Continue to call upon the Lord so that he will never let his vineyard lack priests and consecrated men and women.

5. I now extend a cordial greeting to the faithful from the parishes of Holy Infant Mary of Pojana Maggiore and St John the Baptist in Cicogna; St Euphemia in Carinaro; St Alexander in Albizzate, St Barnabas in Rosaro di Grezzana; St Angelus in Salute di Gatteo; St Mary of the Assumption in Gisso; and St Blase in Piombino Dese. Dear friends, when you return to your parishes bring everyone the greeting of the Pope, who follows the progress of all your communities with prayer. Always be faithful to the Gospel.

Lastly, I greet the members from Abruzzo and Molise of Italy's National Sailors' Association; the

Agorà Cultural Association of Sirignano; the Neapolitan members of the Recreation Club for civil servants of the Campania Region, as well as the faithful from Marconia. My wish for everyone is that the providential time of the Holy Year will be a forceful call to make yourselves instruments of the Lord's grace, for he brings salvation and renewal to the poor in spirit who are open to truth.

6. Praised be Jesus Christ!

With great pleasure I greet each of you, dear members of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, who have come to visit me for your Jubilee. I extend an affectionate greeting to your Pastors who are accompanying you at this moment of deep ecclesial communion. My respectful thoughts also go to the general and to the other officers for their significant participation in today's meeting.

Your Jubilee journey, which began at the Lourdes Grotto, pauses today at the tombs of the Apostles. Dear friends, draw from this moment of reflection and prayer the strength and courage to adhere faithfully to the Gospel and, in the name of Christ, to become authentic servants of justice and peace.

May God help you to carry out your mission. I entrust you to the heavenly intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ and of the Church. May the Blessed Virgin grant all your good desires.

With these sentiments, I bless you all.

7. As I thank you all again for your presence, I invoke upon everyone the loving protection of the Mother of the Church, to whom popular piety pays special devotion in this Marian month, and cordially impart a special Apostolic Blessing to you and to all your loved ones.

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