



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II TO THE ADMINISTRATORS OF ROME AND LAZIO

Thursday, 13 January 2000

Mr President of the Lazio Region,

Mr Mayor of Rome,

Mr President of the Province of Rome,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen!1. This year I have the joy of receiving you together for the traditional exchange of greetings which, at the beginning of every year, strengthens the deep bonds between the See of Peter and the city of Rome, its Province and the Lazio Region. I extend a cordial greeting to the President of the Lazio Region, Hon. Piero Badaloni, to the Mayor of Rome, Hon. Francesco Rutelli, and to the President of the Province of Rome, Hon. Silvano Moffa. I sincerely thank them for the kind words they addressed to me on behalf of the administrations they head. With them I also greet the Presidents of the respective Councils and all of you here. Today's meeting is special, because the Year 2000, a jubilee year, is for Rome, for its Province and for Lazio an extraordinary year that calls for even more effort and cooperation between the various civil institutions, and a closer operational coordination between your administrations and the ecclesial communities. These common interests and the urgent need for ever greater cooperation are also indicated by the form of this meeting, which for the first time brings together, in sincere homage to the Successor of Peter, the members of the Municipal, Provincial and Regional Boards and Councils. Each and every one of them is called to work toward the same goal in serving the citizens and the common good, combining their various skills and legitimate difference of viewpoints.2. The Great Holy Year of 2000 began successfully! The opening of the Holy Door and the other initial Jubilee events, just celebrated, brought throngs of pilgrims to Rome, who together with many Romans experienced in this city, unique in the world, the joy of celebrating the 2,000th anniversary of the birth of Jesus Christ. In fervently thanking God for this promising beginning, I wish to express my deep gratitude to all the institutions you represent and to all who have actively contributed to restoring beauty and functionality to the Eternal City, its Province and the entire Lazio Region, making them better able to welcome the pilgrims coming from every part of the world. Along with my appreciation for the efforts expended, I would like to encourage you to continue this work of restoring a better quality of life to Rome, its Province and the Region, by paying ever greater attention to the many prestigious signs of faith and culture that they preserve.3. The Great Jubilee is being celebrated simultaneously in the Holy Land and in all the Dioceses of the world, but it has its privileged seat in the city that preserves the glorious memories of the Apostles Peter and Paul and of

countless other saints and martyrs. Rome has a unique historical and universal vocation, for which the administrators and people of the city and the surrounding districts have a special responsibility. I therefore wish to salute and thank the people of Rome in particular for their generous willingness to accept the sacrifices and inconveniences connected with the immediate preparation for the Jubilee. I hope that they, aware of the age-old privilege that links them to the mission of Peter's Successor, will know how to see the Jubilee event as a precious moment of grace and of civil, social and economic development. I also hope that they will put their traditional qualities of hospitality at the service of the pilgrims and of everyone who will come to the Eternal City and the surrounding area throughout the Holy Year.

4. With her eyes turned to the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word, the Church, mindful of the journey of grace, holiness and civilization made by mankind in these 2,000 years, offers the Jubilee to the faithful as a time of conversion, of renewed fidelity to the gift received and as a promising opportunity to enter the third millennium with the awareness of past errors and with greater openness to the divine plan. The Church proposes to all people of good will this extraordinary task of purification of memory and appreciation of the gifts received. She invites them to reclaim human values and to re-establish in civil society the demands of truth, justice and solidarity, which alone guarantee peace and well-being among peoples. In their addresses the Mayor of Rome and the Presidents of the Province and Region recalled what, in harmony with these Jubilee requirements, they are pursuing within their respective areas of competence. In expressing my deep satisfaction with what has been done, I wish to recall some aspects that can enrich and give new perspectives to the objectives already achieved.

In the first place, I invite you to devote diligent care to the family, which the Constitution of the Italian Republic itself describes as "a natural society founded on marriage" (Art. 29), entrusting public authorities with the task of "assisting its formation with economic measures and other provisions" (cf. Art. 31). I am aware of the many difficulties, in part traceable to spiritual and cultural causes, which are also dangerous for the family institution in Rome and Lazio. They often depend on concrete social and economic situations which form their human context. It is precisely to protect the family, the basic cell of society, that I ask those in positions of responsibility to shun every initiative that could encourage or support the making of other forms of cohabitation equal to the family. I also ask them to work in harmony and with determination to remove those obstacles, such as the lack of housing at affordable prices or the inadequate structures for accommodating very young children, which make it difficult, and sometimes almost impossible, to start new families and to be open to the gift of life. Along with the family, I dare to ask of you, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, courageous decisions in the school and educational field, in order to make full use of the many energies and initiatives here in Rome and Lazio. It is also important in the health-care field to combine technical progress and cost containment with primary attention to the person who is ill. And what can we say, then, of the many older people who need greater esteem and appreciation, as well as more attentive and friendly assistance? In the Year 2000, which invites us to look with greater responsibility and confidence to the future, I feel obliged to be the voice, once again, of the great many young and unemployed people, to ask you for increased efforts to create new work and employment opportunities. May the Great Jubilee help achieve a moral and civil turning point that can foster a culture of solidarity, hospitality and sharing. In the city of Rome, in its Province and in the entire Region may everyone feel at home and play a positive role in society, sharing in its rights and duties.

6. Honourable representatives of the regional, municipal and provincial administrations, the Great Jubilee presents you with a considerable number of tasks and responsibilities, but it also strongly urges you to face them with enthusiasm. May your one criterion be the good of the people. This good is identified in a significant way with the history, the values

and the future promise which the Jubilee itself recalls and offers. In promising the sincere and generous contribution of the Christian communities of Rome and Lazio to the progress of the City, the Province and the Region, I prayerfully entrust your every project and good intention to the Lord. May Mary, Mother of the Redeemer, protect and accompany you with her constant heavenly aid. With these sentiments, I impart a special Apostolic Blessing to each of you, to your families and to the people who live in Rome, in the Province and in Lazio. © Copyright 2000 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

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