



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II
TO A GROUP OF YOUNG PEOPLE
PREPARING FOR WORLD YOUTH DAYSaturday, 15 January 2000**

Dear Friends,¹ Welcome! I cordially greet you and joyfully welcome you while, as representatives of the Episcopal Conferences and ecclesial movements, associations and communities, you are holding your second international meeting for the next World Youth Day. I thank the Pontifical Council for the Laity and the Italian Committee for the 15th World Youth Day for their work of organization and coordination in preparing for this great jubilee event. In a certain sense you represent the countless young people from every part of the world who have been on their way to Rome in spirit for some time now. Through you I would like to greet them individually and tell them: "The Pope loves you, is counting on you and expects you for the great celebration of faith and witness that we will celebrate together next August!". It will be very warm, maybe even warmer than in Paris.² The World Youth Days, begun in 1985, are by now an important event in the pilgrimage of the younger generation. They are providential opportunities for proclaiming and celebrating the mystery of Christ, Saviour and Redeemer of man, held up to the young people of our time as the foundation of their faith life and commitment to serving their brothers and sisters. This year the World Day is part of the spiritual journey of the Jubilee and thus becomes the "Jubilee of Young People": a privileged occasion to contemplate together the mystery of the Incarnation of God the Son, to adore and to praise Emmanuel, God-with-us, and to discover the consequences for daily life that flow from so important a spiritual experience.³ I pray the Lord that the next World Youth Day will encourage those taking part to profess their faith together at the beginning of the third millennium. In this city and in this Church of Rome, made fruitful by the blood of the Apostles and martyrs, the world's young people will gather to fix their gaze on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith (cf. *Heb* 12: 2), and to offer him their Christian commitment in response. I am sure that they will set out again on their paths of life to be workers for the new evangelization and builders of the civilization of love. It is primarily their responsibility to "ferry" the Gospel into the first century of the new millennium (cf. *Tertio millennio adveniente*, n. 58), imbuing their daily life with the unchangeable values contained in this eternal and unchangeable "Book of Life". As I invoke the motherly protection of the Blessed Virgin on your work, I offer you my best wishes for a happy Year 2000 and impart my Blessing to you all.

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