



# The Holy See

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## ***SPEECH OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II TO PILGRIM GROUPS***

*Saturday, 5 August 2000*

*Dear Brothers and Sisters!* I address a cordial greeting to all of you present here and I am pleased to welcome you today, the first Saturday of August. The Roman liturgy is celebrating the Dedication of the Basilica of St Mary Major, the first church in the Christian West to be named after the Mother of God. My thoughts turn to Mary, Salvation of the Roman people, and to her I entrust your every intention. I would also like in a special way to entrust to her the solemn Prayer Vigil that will be held in the Basilica of St John Lateran this evening. It is an important prayer meeting, which is taking place at the suggestion of and in communion with the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Orthodox Church on the eve of the feast of the Lord's Transfiguration. May this providential initiative encourage ecumenical dialogue and advance our common journey towards the full unity of all Christians. I greet especially the sick people from Malta, together with their helpers and companions, as they return from a pilgrimage to Lourdes. Dear friends, the spiritual message echoing from the grotto of Massabielle will certainly help you to benefit more richly from the Jubilee Year, which is a privileged time of penance and "healing" for men and women in every dimension of their lives. I hope most sincerely that difficulties and trials will not weaken your Christian witness, but help instead to make it more powerful. May the Lord sustain your dear ones, and the doctors, nurses and volunteers who are near to you. I also greet the young people from St Anthony of Padua Parish in Blerick, in the Dutch Diocese of Roermond, and I hope, dear young people, that every day you will read the Gospel and meditate on it after the example of St Anthony of Padua, so that you will become more and more the messengers of his love. Lastly, I greet the Congregation of the Daughters of Our Lady of Mount Calvary gathered here, and the other people and families present. May Mary Most Holy obtain peace and serenity for each of you, as I willingly impart a special Apostolic Blessing to all. © Copyright 2000 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana