



## The Holy See

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### **ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II**

**TO VARIOUS PILGRIM GROUPS** *Saturday, 16 September 2000*

*Dear Brothers and Sisters.*

1. I am pleased to meet you at this special audience, which fits opportunely into the programme of your Jubilee pilgrimage. I extend my cordial welcome to you.

You come from different localities and have arrived in Rome on the day on which the Church commemorates the holy martyrs, St Cornelius, Pope and St Cyprian, Bishop. Your presence in the Eternal City, where numerous believers, together with the Apostles Peter and Paul, have borne their courageous witness to Christ, offers you the possibility of reflecting on your Christian commitment and on the demand for coherent testimony that stems from it.

I cordially hope that by following the example of these courageous witnesses of faith and invoking their protection you may be strengthened in your Christian resolutions, so as to continue on your journey of holiness with renewed enthusiasm, faithful to the Gospel and to the Church's teaching.

2. I affectionately greet the pilgrims who have come from the Dioceses of Sorrento-Castellamare di Stabia and of Castellaneta, accompanied by their respective Pastors, Bishop Felice Cece and Bishop Martino Scarafile, whom I greet with fraternal affection.

Dear brothers and sisters, I hope that your passage through the Holy Door will find you prepared to receive the riches that God wants to pour into souls on the occasion of the Jubilee celebrations.

For you and for your communities, this is a special occasion for spiritual growth, which absolutely must not be wasted.

The Jubilee takes the form of a year of grace and mercy for all believers, who are called to express gratitude and praise to God for his gifts. It is also a favourable time for a more informed recourse to the Sacraments, which are a privileged means of grace desired by Christ for sanctification. The Eucharist, in particular, contains all the mysteries of the Redemption: in it the

Father continues to give us the divine person of the Incarnate Son for humanity's salvation.

The Eucharist must therefore be given priority in ecclesial life, so that the Church and every believer can draw from it the indispensable strength to proclaim and bear witness to the Gospel Message to everyone. The Eucharist is also the celebration of the Pasch of the Lord, in itself a missionary event in which that inseparable link is created between communion and mission, which makes the Church the sacrament of unity of the entire human race.

May your diocesan communities draw from the celebration of the Eucharist the inner conviction and spiritual strength to grow in love and to open themselves to other poorer Churches, in greater need of support in the area of evangelization and missionary cooperation.

3. I now extend a cordial greeting to the other groups and individual pilgrims present, especially the faithful from various parishes. May your communities be places of encounter with Christ, in prayer and brotherhood. This will enable you to welcome those who live somewhat on the fringes of the Church, helping them to rediscover in her the family of God's children.

I joyfully welcome the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate, who during these days are celebrating their General Chapter in which they intend to reawaken in their institute a more vivid awareness of the original charism: the passion for proclaiming the Gospel to the people. Dear sisters, open your hearts in prayer to the voice of the Spirit. Ask him to inspire in the congregation a new impetus for the kingdom of God. The third millennium awaits people burning with the love of Christ, who can proclaim salvation to the new generations with incisive effectiveness. I pray for you that the decisions which you will reach during the Chapter will fully reflect the Lord's will.

I am also pleased to welcome the large group of administrators and personnel of the Catholic Insurance Company of Verona, who have come here to reconfirm their faith and the roots from which their esteemed company draws inspiration for its activities. To be called "Catholic" is indeed a heavy responsibility. I therefore encourage each of you always to remain consistent with the values the Church professes, while I express my appreciation for all the institute does to increase cooperation and social solidarity.

I now extend a special word of greeting to the representatives of the Paul VI Institute of Brescia and of the Edizioni Studium publishers in Rome, whom I thank for the tribute of their recent publication on Pope Paul VI. I also greet the various associations and groups present, in particular, the retired Alpine troops here in great numbers, and the members of the Camunni Group from the Hermitage of Bienno in the Diocese of Brescia. May the Jubilee experience be an effective incentive of love, justice and peace for everyone so as to renew every walk of life in Christ.

4. I am pleased to greet the participants in the Second International Congress of the Central

European Vascular Forum, gathered in Rome to discuss different vascular pathologies and new techniques to treat them. May these deliberations serve to strengthen the international resolve to put medical knowledge and expertise at the service of all people without distinction, and to use advances in medical science to safeguard and defend human life at every stage of its existence.

Thank you for your presence, and may the Lord bless you and your families with his grace and peace.

5. A special thought goes to the group of Basilian Fathers, Sisters Handmaids of Mary Immaculate and the lay members of the Ukrainian Greek-Orthodox Church who have come from the Archdiocese of Lviv. Dear people, I hope that the gift of the Jubilee pilgrimage and the experience of your visit to the tombs of the Apostles will serve to strengthen your adherence to the Gospel and your communion in love with the only Church of Christ.

6. As I invoke on all those present the intercession of Mary, Mother of the Redeemer, on this Saturday that is especially dedicated to her, I sincerely impart to you and your families my Apostolic Blessing.

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