



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II
TO JUBILEE PILGRIMS FROM THE ITALIAN DIOCESES,
HUNGARY AND VARIOUS ASSOCIATIONS**

Saturday, 21 October 2000

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

1. I am pleased to extend a cordial welcome to this Jubilee audience on the eve of *World Mission Sunday*. The great mystery of the Incarnation of the divine Word, which took place 2,000 years ago in Mary's womb, is once again presented for our reflection on this occasion. Today's meeting is therefore a very fitting opportunity for becoming more aware of the urgency of bringing to the third millennium the great message of salvation offered by God to humanity.

In this festive atmosphere of missionary commitment, I greet all of you gathered in Rome for your Jubilee pilgrimage, beginning with the group of pilgrims from the *Diocesan Vicariate of Northern Bologna*, led by Auxiliary Bishop Ernesto Vecchi, whom I thank for his address to me on behalf of you all. Dear friends, I am always pleased to remember my visit to your city three years ago for the solemn closing of the National Eucharistic Congress. I was actually in the territory of your Vicariate. I remember the great Prayer Vigil and the solemn closing Eucharistic celebration that followed. *Always cherish in your hearts a vivid memory of that ecclesial event*, which was an important moment in your preparation for the Great Jubilee. In fact, the Eucharistic Jesus, the source and summit of all evangelization, belongs to the "heart" of the Jubilee. It is from him that you can constantly draw energy and courage for the mission to which God calls you.

I know that the relics of your patron, the saintly Bishop Petronius, were recently transferred to the basilica dedicated to him. I congratulate you and I hope that this significant celebration will help you *to maintain a deep awareness of your "Petronian" identity*. May the Madonna of St Luke, so dear to the Bolognese, and St Petronius, your special protector, sustain you in your renewed journey of life and Christian witness.

2. My affectionate thoughts now turn to the *faithful from the Diocese of Palestrina* attending this audience with their Bishop, Eduardo Davino, who warmly expressed their common sentiments.

Dear friends, your pilgrimage to the tombs of the Apostles is a powerful invitation to experience forgiveness, reconciliation and renewal of life. It is a call each day to begin anew the journey of faith and participation in the life of the Christian community. This commitment to begin again must obviously be interpreted in a spiritual, not chronological, sense. I encourage you to persevere.

I hope that your celebration of the Holy Year and especially your visit to the See of Peter and your passing through the Holy Door will increase your desire for authentic conversion, in order to begin a more intense and generous journey of openness to divine grace and witness to Gospel values.

3. I now address you, dear *faithful from the Diocese of Crema*, together with your Bishop, Angelo Paravisi, to whom I am grateful for the sentiments expressed on behalf of you all. This meeting reminds me of the warm welcome that your community gave me during the Pastoral Visit I made to Crema in June 1992. I know that you prepared for today's meeting with a Diocesan Synod and with the various stages that progressively marked the pastoral journey of your Diocese in these years.

I urge you to continue with renewed enthusiasm in your efforts to be faithful to the Gospel. Draw light and strength from the moving Gospel account of the disciples at Emmaus, from which your pastoral journey takes inspiration. May the fascinating discovery of the living presence of the risen Christ through listening to his word and the "breaking of Bread" spur you to deepen your communion and pastoral cooperation within your communities and renew your zeal to proclaim the Gospel of salvation.

4. An affectionate greeting goes next to the large group of pilgrims from the parishes of *St Tammarus, St Vitus, St Catherine* and *Our Lady of Good Counsel in Grumo Nevano*, in the Diocese of Aversa, from which dear Archbishop Crescenio Sepe, Secretary of the Committee for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, comes and who fittingly expressed the sentiments of his countrymen. Dear brothers and sisters, may today's celebration at the Chair of Peter strengthen you in your personal and ecclesial journey towards an increasingly strong and mature faith, which will be continually translated into charitable initiatives in the service of your brethren.

Be conscious of your role within a Christian community that intensely lives its own sense of ministry to the world, towards which it feels the duty of presenting the Gospel in a credible way.

5. My cordial thoughts go also to the numerous *members of the Italian Federation of Blood-Donor Associations*, accompanied by the Auxiliary Bishop of Rome, Armando Brambilla, who expressed the sentiments of each of you. Dear friends, donating blood is a great act of solidarity that involves the deepest aspects of the human personality by committing it to live the spirituality of the gift. As I express my sincere appreciation for the significant witness of sensitivity offered by your praiseworthy associations, I urge you to enrich their various social and health-care activities with a solid spiritual formation, so that they can always carry out their service to life in the best way possible.

6. I cordially greet the young Hungarian students from the Cistercian High School in Pécs. May this meeting be a source of divine grace for you. Praised be Jesus Christ!

7. Lastly, I extend an affectionate welcome to the other pilgrim groups. In particular, to the members of the National Association of Retired Firefighters, the Association of Itinerant Campers, the Association of Historical Commemorations of the Marches Region, the Lions Club of Caserta, to participants in the congress organized by the Institute of Charity and to the Capuchin Friars of the Umbrian Province. My affectionate greeting goes to you all, together with the wish for an intense and fruitful Jubilee celebration.

As I invoke the motherly protection of Mary, Star of Evangelization and Queen of the Missions, I sincerely bless each of you, along with your families, your communities and your associations.

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