



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE NEW CARDINALS
AND THEIR RELATIVES AND FRIENDS**

Friday, 23 February 2001

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

1. The great celebrations which yesterday and the day before saw us play a leading role on a new page of the Church's history are still echoing in everyone's mind. With a heart filled with gratitude to the Lord, I welcome you today to this simpler, more informal gathering.

I first greet you, venerable Italian Cardinals. Through you the Church in Italy will further enrich the College of Cardinals with pastoral wisdom and apostolic enthusiasm. I gladly extend my cordial greetings to all who shared the joy of this moment with you and who appreciate your love for Christ and your generous dedication to the Church. I ask you all, dear relatives, friends and diocesans of the new Cardinals, to assure them the support of your prayers so that they will faithfully persevere in their respective tasks and continue their valuable work for the benefit of the whole Christian people.

2. I greet the French-speaking faithful who have accompanied the new Cardinals from their countries: France, Egypt, Syria, Côte d'Ivoire and Viêt Nam. The celebrations we have just experienced invite us to become ever more aware of our personal role in the Church. Every baptized person, by virtue of his Baptism, is called to be a Gospel witness and to take an active part in building up the Body of Christ along with their Pastors, who are responsible for guiding the People of God.

As you return to your Dioceses, may you feel strengthened in your faith and in your love for Christ and his Church, with a renewed desire to follow the Lord and to pattern your life on his! To this end, every Christian is called to develop his spiritual life by contemplating the Saviour. I give you

all an affectionate Apostolic Blessing.

3. With affection in the Lord, I greet the new Cardinals from the English-speaking lands and all who have accompanied them to Rome on this happy occasion. Through the years, I have seen at first hand the immense riches of the cultures from which you come - India, South Africa, Ireland, England and the United States of America. Now the new Cardinals place these riches still more generously at the service of the universal Church as they are more closely united with the Successor of the Apostle Peter in the task of proclaiming the Gospel to all nations.

Dear friends, we live in a time when people are hungry for the deeper things of the Spirit. Now is the moment to cast our nets into the deep! The beginning of the new millennium is a time for us to renew our commitment to the mission entrusted to us by Christ, a mission rooted in the depths of contemplation. This contemplation, as I said in the Apostolic Letter *Novo millennio ineunte*, is the contemplation of the face of Jesus Christ, the Word of life: "that which was from the beginning ... we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 Jn 1: 1, 3).

May the communities of faith to which you belong become more and more true schools of prayer, contemplation and mission. Upon you, your families and your countries I gladly invoke the loving protection of Mary, Mother of the Church.

4. I extend a cordial greeting to the newly appointed Cardinals from Germany. With you, I also greet your relatives and friends, your co-workers in the Dioceses, the authorities and the faithful who have accompanied you to Rome.

You know that I also regard your elevation to the rank of Cardinal as a sign of my esteem for the Church that lives and works in your country. So I am sure that this honour will further encourage you to bear generous witness to Christ and his Gospel. As I wish the Church in Germany growth, prosperity and many spiritual fruits, I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing to you, to your loved ones who have accompanied you to the Eternal City and to all who are entrusted to your pastoral care.

5. I affectionately greet the pilgrims from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Spain, Honduras, Peru and Venezuela who have joyfully accompanied their new Cardinals. I now ask them for greater zeal in the Church's service, to the point of giving their lives for the Gospel, as did the saint we are commemorating today, St Polycarp of Smyrna. This also involves a greater responsibility for their ecclesial communities and, above all, for those who, like you, are closest to them. I therefore invite you to help them with prayer, loyal cooperation and spiritual closeness in this new mission entrusted to them.

After these intense days spent in Rome, take back to your families and compatriots the Pope's

affectionate greeting. He feels very close to the situation in each of your countries, prays for their people and now cordially blesses you.

6. With particular affection I sincerely greet the Cardinals from Brazil and Portugal. Since they represent a significant part of the Catholic world in nations which, because of their historical tradition and missionary commitment, represent the Church's future hope, I ask almighty God to bless these peoples and their lands and to support them on the path of the new evangelization with abundant fruits of holiness in all areas of society.

I extend a special greeting to the Cardinals' relatives and friends, who have been joined by some members of the local Episcopate, particularly from the Episcopal Conferences and various diocesan communities. This significant participation is meant to show the esteem of the Brazilian and Portuguese peoples for their Pastors and for the work they have carried out in recent years with generosity and self-denial. May the Blessed Virgin protect their countries, so dear to me, and make the new Cardinals living examples of dedicated Pastors who are willing to serve the Church and the Roman Pontiff with fidelity and love!

7. I cordially greet everyone who has accompanied Cardinal Marian and Cardinal Zenon during these solemn days.

I thank Providence that the Latin Church in Ukraine is bearing witness to a living faith which survived the years of oppression and trial; enlivened by the Divine Spirit, she is growing and can rejoice today in her new Cardinal. May the red colour of his robes be a sign of the universal Church's gratitude for all the priests and faithful in Ukraine who paid for their love of Christ and their desire for union with Peter by their sufferings and frequently by the gift of their lives. May it also be a sign of hope that this seed of blood will bear blessed fruits in the new millennium.

I am pleased that the Church in Poland can share in a special way in the Petrine ministry through the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education (for Seminaries and Educational Institutions). I greet everyone who has come to accompany him with prayer during these days.

I ask God that your participation in the Consistory will enable you to experience in faith the mystery of the Church's universality and unity, of which the College of Cardinals is a particular sign. I entrust the new Cardinals and everyone present to Christ and to his Mother. God bless you all!

8. I extend my cordial greetings to you, dear Ukrainian pilgrims, on this solemn day when two sons of your homeland have been created Cardinals together: one of the Latin rite, the other of the Eastern rite. Pray that this sign of unity may become a pledge of full communion between East and West. As I look forward to meeting you during the visit I will make, please God, next June, I send all your compatriots an affectionate greeting.

I also extend an affectionate greeting to you, dear faithful from Lithuania, as you surround your worthy representative who has been raised to the dignity of Cardinal. It is a dignity that honours the entire Church in Lithuania for her fidelity to Christ, for which she paid a high price during the years of communist domination. Persevere in love of the Gospel and always be united with your Pastors: God will always give you his protection, which I implore with a constant remembrance in my prayer.

With great joy I lastly greet you, dear faithful who have come from Latvia to gather round a son of your land, called to be a member of the College of Cardinals. Accompany him with your affection and with your prayer that God will help him in his mission of service to the Church. When you return home, I ask you to bring my blessing and greetings to your compatriots.

9. Dear and venerable Brothers who are now members of the College of Cardinals! In taking my leave, allow me to express my cordial wishes to you again. Each of your various ministries is always at the service of the one Christ and his Mystical Body. With fraternal esteem, I encourage you to continue your spiritual and apostolic mission, which has reached a very important stage today.

Keep your gaze firmly set on Christ, drawing from his Heart an abundance of grace and comfort after the example of the fearless servants of the Church who glorified God down the ages with the heroic practice of the virtues and unswerving fidelity to the Gospel.

To this end I call on the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, and cordially impart a special Apostolic Blessing to each of you and to all who have gathered round you with their affection and devotion.