



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II Saturday, 15 March 2003 Dear University Students, 1. I greet you with affection and I thank you for your taking part, with devout joy, in this Marian vigil for the First European Day of University Students. I especially thank Cardinal Camillo Ruini for his kind words on your behalf. I also thank Mons. Lorenzo Leuzzi and all who have helped to organize this day. I also thank the choirs, the orchestra, Vatican Radio and Vatican Television Centre which have guaranteed the various radio and television link-ups. I cordially greet the young people who have joined us with their Pastors from Uppsala, Bratislava, Krakow, Cologne, Fatima, Vienna and from several parishes in Ukraine. Thank you, dear friends, for your witness of faith and brotherhood! I formulate every good wish for your studies and for your plans for the future. This evening we have prayed for Europe at an important juncture in its history. Young people can and must take part in building the new Europe, with their contribution of aspirations, ideals, study and work, creativity and generous dedication. In a special way, young Christians are called to proclaim and bear witness to Christ and, in His Name, to be builders of *unity* in diversity, of *freedom* in truth, of *peace* in justice, of that peace which the world needs particularly today. Dear young friends, this evening I entrust to you a desire that is close to my heart: that the new generations be faithful to the lofty spiritual and moral principles which in the past inspired the fathers of the united Europe. 2. During this vigil in which I can sense the usual enthusiasm and faith of young people, our thoughts turn naturally to the World Youth Days. They are events that enable me to meet young people from the various continents, from one end of the earth to another, to listen to them and speak to them of Christ. Every time a special theme is offered for everyone's attention. For the next Youth Day, to be celebrated in every Diocese on Palm Sunday, since we are in the Year of the Rosary, I have chosen the loving words of Jesus to his beloved Apostle: "*Behold, your Mother!*" (Jn 19,27). This is a strong invitation to all of you, dear young people, to recognize and welcome Mary into your lives as Mother. Young people of Europe and of the world, open your heart to Mary and docilely follow her example! 3. I now address you, dear young people of Rome, and make an appointment with you for Thursday, 10 April, in St Peter's Square. It will be an occasion of prayer and festivity, as this evening is. We will make together a solemn act of entrustment to Our Lady, asking her to watch over you and to protect your path as young people of the third millennium. On that occasion I will present to each one who is present a pair of Rosary beads asking you to say this traditional Marian prayer, so that it will also be more familiar to young persons today. The fervent praying of the Rosary can change the destiny of the world. May this consciousness inspire you during the procession you will shortly make to the Church of St Yves at the University, carrying the icon of Mary Seat of Wisdom. I am united with you in spirit as, with affection, I bless you and your loved ones. I wish to thank Cardinal Joachim Meisner of Cologne for the cordial invitation given to me, who as you see, am not too young any more. Thank you for confirming it. This television link-up is something wonderful. Here in Rome, in this audience hall, I can see the Church of St Ann in Krakow. It is a church that I know very well. You know that I came to Rome from Krakow and there I often visited that university church, prayed there, made retreats there. Pleasant memories. They were not left orphans because they have another Cardinal, who can be seen on TV. Both can

repeat, this TV is a wonderful invention. Even by way of the TV they can even applaud. That's all. Today we have been in touch from Rome with Bratislava, Cologne with Cardinal Meisner, Fatima, Uppsala, Vienna, Wien with Cardinal König, we saw him; and Krakow with Cardinal Macharski in St Ann's. We should move to our conclusion, which means the Blessing, something serious, in Latin, making it even more serious. This Blessing should be received with the due spirit of devotion.

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