



The Holy See

MARIAN PRAYER VIGIL AT THE CONCLUSION
OF THE SECOND EUROPEAN DAY OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II

Saturday, 13 March 2004

1. It gives me special joy to meet you on the occasion of the *Second European Day of University Students*. I address a cordial greeting to each one of you who come from the various Roman Athenaeums and I thank you for your enthusiastic presence. I greet the Cardinal Vicar and the civil and academic Authorities present here.

I say a heartfelt "thank you" to Mons. Leuzzi and to all who worked to prepare this event, to the inter-university Choir and Orchestra who enlivened it, to the Vatican Television Centre and Vatican Radio who have enabled it to be broadcast in various European nations.

With great affection I extend my greeting to the young people who are linked to us by satellite in Prague, Czech Republic; Nicosia, Cypress; Gniezno, Poland; Vilnius, Lithuania; Riga, Lettonia; Tallinn, Estonia; Ljubljana, Slovenia; Budapest, Hungary; La Valletta, Malta; and Bratislava, Slovakia. These are the 10 Countries that will be entering the European Union.

2. This Marian vigil has a strong symbolic value. Indeed, dear university students, you are also entrusted with *an important role in building the united Europe*, firmly rooted in the spiritual traditions and values that have shaped it. In this regard, universities constitute one of the typical contexts in which culture, marked by a Christian influence, has been formed down the centuries. It is vital that this rich patrimony of ideals not be squandered.

May Mary, whom we have several times called upon as *Sedes Sapientiae*, protect each one of you, your studies and your commitment to your cultural and spiritual formation.

3. Dear young people of Rome, carrying the Cross, you will shortly arrive at the Church of St Agnese in Agone where together you will renew your profession of faith. The university students in the other countries have joined this pilgrimage in spirit. I send them my cordial greeting.

To you here and to those who have joined us via radio or television I impart a special Blessing, which I gladly extend to your families, your Nations and the whole of Europe.