



The Holy See

**LETTER OF JOHN PAUL II
ON THE OCCASION OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER
OF THE ORDER OF PREACHERS**

*To Reverend Father Carlos Alfonso Azpiroz Costa
Master General of the Dominicans
Krakow*

In your hands, Venerable Brother, I place my cordial greeting and the expression of my spiritual closeness to the representatives of the Dominican communities across the world, which have been meeting over the last weeks in Krakow to pray together and to examine the Order's present situation and the tasks the Founder's charism requires of it in the perspective of the challenges of today. I am certain that this effort was accompanied by the breath of the Holy Spirit, who has guided the spiritual sons of St Dominic down the ages, inspiring them to spread the Gospel judiciously and to serve Christ in his Church readily. May his breath accompany you always, so that your ministry will bear blessed fruits.

I am delighted that this time, the first in history, the General Chapter has taken place in Krakow, having as its special patron *St Jacek Odrowaz* (St Hyacinth), who has such strong associations with this beloved city. I am confident that your meditations will not lack references to the apostolic zeal of this apostle of the Slav countries, which he travelled across on his way from Gdansk to Kiev, not only proclaiming the Gospel but also witnessing to Christ's love through his own holiness.

Tomorrow, when we will be commemorating this Saint in the liturgy, I will pray specially that his spirit may accompany the Dominican confreres who are carrying out the same mission today on all the continents.

The apostolic activity of the Dominicans has always been bound to the "service of thought". An expression of this has been their concern to further learning in the various branches of knowledge, and their concern to start a philosophical and theological dialogue with their exponents. Krakow,

with its university, has for centuries been a special witness of this service. I entrust its continuation today to you, so that the generations of our century may draw abundantly from true wisdom and become increasingly free in spirit, able to take on their own responsibilities at the service of the dignity of people in every walk of life, private and social.

I entrust you, Reverend Master General, the Members of the Chapter and all the Dominicans to the Mother of God, Queen of the Rosary. May her intercession obtain for your Order all God's gifts, so that it may develop in peace and serve the Church fruitfully. I warmly bless you all: In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

From Castel Gandolfo, 16 August 2004

JOHN PAUL II