



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS
POPE JOHN PAUL II
ON THE OCCASION OF THE PRESENTATION
OF THE NEW APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTION "ECCLESIA IN URBE"**

Monday, 2 February 1998

Your Eminence,

Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate, 1. Today's meeting is a cause of deep joy for me, because it offers me the opportunity officially to give you the new Constitution *Ecclesia in Urbe*, which updates certain organizational aspects of the Vicariate of Rome, bringing them into line with the changed social and ecclesial circumstances of the Christian community. With deep gratitude I greet Cardinal Camillo Ruini, my first co-worker in leading the People of God who live in Rome. Together with him, I would like to offer a cordial greeting to the Archbishop Vicegerent and the Auxiliary Bishops who make their valuable contribution to the orderly growth of Church activities in the various areas of the city. My affectionate thoughts also turn at this time to the priests, to consecrated men and women and to their lay coworkers, who devote their best energies so that Christ's Gospel may be continually proclaimed to all Romans. Divine Providence has assigned to Rome the special vocation to be the see of Peter's Successor and, through the exercise of his ministry, to carry out in the community of the redeemed the service of presiding in charity (cf. St Ignatius of Antioch, *Ad Romanos*, PG 5, 685). This is the reason why our Diocese is marked by an extraordinary wealth and variety of persons and ecclesial activities, which, while defining its unique features, also give rise to the specific needs of pastoral co-ordination, for which we must provide. 2. In deference to the recommendations of the recent Diocesan Synod and after listening to the suggestions I received from various parts, I have decided that the Apostolic Constitution *Vicariae potestatis* of my venerable Predecessor, the Servant of God Paul VI, should be revised so that the Vicariate of Rome can more effectively provide her proper service, updating it in accordance with the new canonical provisions and the changed situations of the present time. In the 20 years that have passed since the above-mentioned Constitution of Paul VI, the Vicariate of Rome has found that it must respond to new and complex needs; in this regard, the opportuneness of revising its structures seems clearer than ever. New pastoral opportunities and the need constantly to strengthen the vital relationship between the Bishop of Rome and the city's Christian community and, more generally, the rich, complex reality of civil society, find a response in the text which I present to you today. I hope that it will be a suitable tool for renewing this Church according to the desire expressed by the Diocesan Synod and will contribute to the period of pastoral growth that has already begun with the City Mission, to which the various pastoral workers are very generously committed. 3. All this cannot fail to encourage fruitful contact with the pilgrims who will come to Rome for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000. This has great

pastoral importance. It is easy to imagine their expectations as they come to the city bathed in the blood of the Apostles and martyrs. How spiritually refreshing it will be for them to find here a welcoming community, actively working in the name of Christ, Redeemer of man! I entrust to each individual, according to his own responsibilities, the implementation of the provisions I am giving you today and, as I invoke the help of Mary "Salus Populi Romani" on you and on the various parish communities, I willingly impart a cordial Apostolic Blessing to you all. © Copyright 1998 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

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