



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE JURY MEMBERS
OF THE "PREMIO INTERNAZIONALE PERDONANZA"***

Thursday, 23 August 2001

*Venerable Brother in the Episcopate,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

1. I am pleased to welcome you jury members of the "Premio Internazionale Perdonanza" (International Prize for "Pardon"). You chose me as the first to be awarded this prize, which is linked to the name of my holy Predecessor, Celestine V. In expressing my gratitude to you, I greet each one, with a special thought for Archbishop Giuseppe Molinari, Pastor of the Archdiocese, for Mr Biagio Tempesta, Mayor of the city of Aquila, and Dr Antonio Cicchetti, President of the Jury, whom I thank for his cordial words on behalf of you all.

I note with joy that at the end of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, as if to prolong its spirit in connection with the ancient privilege granted by St Celestine V, you have established this prize to be awarded annually to a person who has distinguished himself in promoting peace, reconciliation and solidarity. Indeed, Pietro Angelerio, the holy hermit of Morrone, was inspired by these values 700 years ago. He became Pope in a turbulent period in the Church's history, and, as one reads in the regulations for establishing this prize, he linked inseparably to the beloved Abbey of Collemaggio, the gift of a plenary indulgence, which could be enjoyed by all Christians, "respecting the simple rule of a threefold reconciliation: with the Creator, with creatures and with themselves" (art. 2).

2. The "Perdonanza" Prize contains a message in perfect harmony with the courageous commitment to spiritual renewal to which the Church is called at the beginning of the third millennium. The Indulgence, granted by Celestine V *"universis Christi fidelibus"*, actually proposed to the Christians of that time, who were marked by deep differences, the remedy of humble and sincere conversion to Christ. Is not this also the right "treatment" for Christians of today, often

troubled by equally serious disagreements?

The "Perdonanza" has not only a religious but also a cultural and social content, which the prize you have founded properly emphasizes. It reminds the people of our day, who are longing for justice and solidarity, love and peace, that without a sound reference to God it is impossible to recover those lofty moral values that are valid everywhere.

3. Therefore, in receiving this recognition, I express the wish that your initiative will help keep alive the memory of St Celestine, shedding light on his spiritual teaching with its practical social implications. May it contribute to spreading and consolidating an authentic culture of peace and solidarity, the fruit of a true and stable reconciliation "with the Creator, with creatures and with themselves".

With these wishes, as I invoke the intercession of Mary Assumed into Heaven, venerated in the basilica of Collemaggio, Aquila, of St John the Baptist and of St Celestine V, I willingly impart a special Apostolic Blessing to those present, to your loved ones and to the entire community of Aquila.