



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER TO ROME'S SANITATION WORKERS

Sunday, 7 January 2001

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

1. As we pause before the crib you have set up, I am pleased to express to you my sentiments of esteem and affection, as I offer you my best wishes for the New Year. From the beginning of my Petrine ministry this pleasant event has been repeated each year at the end of the Christmas season. My most sincere congratulations to those who created this characteristic crib, which is enriched each year with some new feature.

I affectionately greet everyone present, first of all the Mayor of Rome, whom I thank for his courteous words. Through him I would like once again to thank the city and all its administrators for their generous work in preparing for the Jubilee and later in its various phases.

2. Indeed, today's visit takes place on the day after the close of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, during which millions of pilgrims passed through the Holy Door. Countless people wanted in this way to thank the Lord for the abundance of mercy he showed us by becoming man for our salvation.

For you, ecological workers, the year just ended was one of more intense work, so that our beloved city could always be "in festive attire". I have frequently seen you at work around St Peter's Square early in the morning before people came to the Vatican. I am grateful for your painstaking diligence and for the sentiments that prompted it.

3. Now it is time to return to our normal routine, keeping in mind the message that comes to us from the Great Jubilee. It is the same message offered to us by Christmas and by the crib, the most eloquent symbol of Christmas. We must set out anew from Christ, if we are to advance confidently into the new millennium as witnesses to the love of God, who became one of us and

was born among us.

With these sentiments I invoke upon you, your families and your work the protection of Mary, Mother of Jesus, whom we have contemplated today in the mystery of his Baptism in the Jordan. May you be accompanied by the Blessing which I cordially impart to you and your loved ones.