



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE MEMBERS OF THE "CIRCOLO SAN PIETRO"

Thursday, 3 May 2001

Dear Executives and Members of the "Circolo San Pietro",

1. I sincerely thank you for this visit, which, as every year, gives me the opportunity to meet you. I greet you with affection and I am thinking of your families and those who are unable to be present.

I greet and thank your President, Marquis Marcello Sacchetti, who kindly wished to express the sentiments you share. In his words I grasped the enthusiasm and generosity with which your association carries out its liturgical service and intense charitable activity every day, especially for the neediest. I also listened carefully to the projects that you intend to carry out so that, as we have just said, your solidarity may be even more "a faithful extension of the charitable hand" of the Successor of Peter. I extend a fraternal greeting to your spiritual director, Bishop Ettore Cunial, and to the other priests who guide your spiritual formation.

2. In welcoming you today, my thoughts go to the Holy Year, which ended successfully a few months ago, and to your important and skilled contribution to its success. At the beginning of this meeting, we recalled not only your liturgical activities but also the meals you distributed to the poor from the kiosks prepared at the four Patriarchal Basilicas. Your association also supervised the collection of numerous testimonies of people from every nation and continent who came to Rome for the Jubilee. You wished to include some in a booklet to present to me as a gift. Thank you for your much appreciated cooperation. May God reward you!

Filled with the emotions experienced throughout the Jubilee journey, we have entered the new century and the new millennium, aware that the Lord calls us to be apostles of our time. The memory of our strong ecclesial experiences certainly acts as a stimulus to open wide our hearts to the promising horizons of the new evangelization. In this spirit you too, dear friends, must resume

the "ordinary" but profound work of your apostolate, spreading Christian hope everywhere.

3. Do not forget that holiness is the first commitment of every Christian and of every community. I wished to stress this in my Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio ineunte*, entrusted to the entire people of God as a gift of the Jubilee.

So try to live this Gospel ideal first of all within your families, so that they may be "oases" of family spirituality and openness to your neighbour. Show your adherence to Christ by spreading his light with your every gesture and your conduct in your work and professional activities. I am certain that the constant search for holiness by all its members will impress on the *Circolo San Pietro* a fresh desire for authentic newness, especially if it is supported by prayer and attentive listening to the Word of God, as well as by frequent participation in the sacraments and by a style conformed to Gospel teachings.

Only a strong spiritual life can sustain an effective and generous charitable activity. Only if they are enlivened by the breath of the Holy Spirit do your initiatives of assistance and human development for the elderly and children, for the poor and the sick become eloquent signs of the Gospel of love.

With this openness of heart, may you accomplish the many plans that direct you towards vast missionary horizons, making everyone experience the merciful love of God. You bring to the needy, in the name of the Pope, the comfort of brotherly love, expressed in concrete sharing and solidarity.

Your mission includes the collection in Rome of "Peter's Pence", entrusted to your association through an ancient privilege. Today you came to bring me its results; thank you also for this! May the Lord help you to accomplish your ecclesial service always more faithfully, which, as your motto says, involves "prayer", "action" and "sacrifice".

I entrust each and every one of you to Mary, as we enter the month of May dedicated to her. May Our Lady accompany you, protect your families and render your apostolate fruitful. I promise to remember you in my prayers and I gladly bless you.