



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO A GROUP OF ACADEMICS AND PROFESSORS
WHO HAVE COME TO PRESENT THE FIRST VOLUME
OF THE RUSSIAN CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA**

Tuesday 23 April 2002

*Brothers in the Episcopate,
Distinguished Academics and Professors,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

1. It gives me spiritual joy to welcome you in this special audience today. You have come to present to the Pope the first volume of the great Russian Catholic Encyclopedia, the fruit of your hard work and your love for the Church! My heartfelt thanks!

I greet with fraternal affection Archbishop Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz of the Mother of God Archdiocese in Moscow, and I am delighted with the initiative that he has accepted and supported in order to offer the Russian people this important gift that illustrates the tradition, life and teaching of the Catholic Church. In addressing him, I would also like to extend an affectionate greeting to the Catholic pastors and faithful of the Russian Federation.

My deep thanks go to the highly qualified group of experts, academics, writers and collaborators, coordinated by Fr Gregory Ciorok, who have begun this worthwhile enterprise with great competence.

I am grateful to all those who with far-sighted generosity have supported the practical implementation of the work. May the Lord reward each one abundantly!

2. Dear friends, I am pleased that despite the difficulties, you have happily concluded this first stage of your programme.

The *Encyclopedia* you have compiled is an important contribution that Catholics wish to offer to

those who speak Russian who want to know more about the treasures that God has lavished upon men through his Church. With this work, the Catholic community, present in Russia for several centuries, intends to reaffirm its desire to collaborate with the great Russian culture in order to engage in a profitable and fruitful dialogue with it for the great benefit of the people whose culture it is.

I hope that your labour will contribute to bringing about a deeper reciprocal knowledge and esteem among all who live Christ's Gospel in your beloved homeland. Indeed, the common sources of the faith and the respective legitimate traditions bear witness to the command of Our Lord Jesus to take the Gospel to every corner of the earth (cf. Mt 28,19-20).

With these sentiments, as I pray for the intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church and of Sts Cyril and Methodius upon all the beloved Russian people, I impart my cordial Blessing to you and to your communities, as a pledge of abundant spiritual fruits.