



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II
AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE ANNUAL LENTEN RETREAT
HELD FOR THE ROMAN CURIA**

Saturday, 6 March 2004

I am delighted to express the most cordial gratitude to you, dear Professor, also on behalf of all the participants, at the end of the Retreat during which you led us in the contemplation of the mystery of Christ, suggesting to us profound meditations on the theme: *“Following You, the Light of life”*.

I am thinking with deep appreciation of the commitment to advanced and proximate preparation that this has entailed for you. Together with the collaborators of the Roman Curia, we have profited from the reflections that you gradually unfolded for us with original insights and a vast theological, biblical and spiritual knowledge. What also struck us was the passion with which you explained this content, frequently referring to the ministerial experiences of every day life. Thank you, because with the distinctive style of your theological research and your pastoral activity, you have provided for our minds and hearts precious incentives to become ever more deeply involved in following the One who is the Light of the world.

I would also like to express to you my special appreciation for the colloquial and prayerful tone that you impressed upon our journey, helping us to lift our spirits to God in that attitude of contemplation, steeped in faith and love, that I never cease to ask of the People of God, urging Christian communities to let shine forth in the midst of the world first and foremost the “art of prayer” (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, n. 32).

For his part, the Lord will repay you for all this. To him I entrust you and the ecclesial service you carry out with zeal and fidelity. May the Blessed Virgin, whom you helped us to contemplate in the context of our earthly pilgrimage towards the heavenly homeland, watch over you and all of your apostolic activities.

Lastly, I extend an affectionate greeting to all of you who have taken part in this Retreat, with a grateful thought also for those who collaborated in it by preparing the liturgy and the hymns. As I entrust each one to the heavenly protection of the Blessed Virgin, I impart my Blessing to you all.