



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II TO THE INTERNATIONAL UNION OF SCHÖNSTATT FAMILIES

Thursday, 20 January 2005

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the International Union of Schönstatt Families,

1. On the occasion of the opening of your General Chapter you have come to Rome to reflect in prayer at the tombs of the Apostles and to renew your fidelity to the Church before the Successor of Peter. I am delighted with your visit and warmly welcome you to the Pope's house. May these days spent in the "Eternal City" be a time of grace in which you all experience the closeness of God and of his saints!

2. "The future of humanity passes by way of the family" (Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*, n. 86). I encourage you to have a profound understanding of marriage and the family in the light of the faith. It is a positive sign that families actually represent the charism of your Federation. The family is a "school of love". May you transmit your enthusiasm for marriage and the family to others! More than ever, society needs healthy families in order to guarantee the common good. If we strengthen the sacred institution of marriage and the family according to God's plan, then love and solidarity among human beings will increase!

3. Dear brothers and dear sisters, the *Year of the Eucharist* is a pressing invitation to you all to find "in the supreme sacrament of love the wellspring of all communion" (*Message for the World Day of Peace 2005*, n. 12). Rediscover the great gift of the Eucharist! You will thus be able to "experience fully the beauty and the mission of the family" (Apostolic Letter *Mane Nobiscum Domine*, n. 30; *L'Osservatore Romano* English edition, Special Insert, 13 October 2004).

Through the intercession of the *Mater Ter Admirabilis*, I impart to you with all my heart the Apostolic Blessing.

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