



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 100th ANNIVERSARY
OF THE PUBLISHING HOUSE "LA SCUOLA" FROM BRESCIA**

Thursday, 28 October 2004

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

1. I am grateful to the Lord for this meeting. In his name I greet you all with joy and affection. I thank the President of the publishing house "La Scuola" for his words interpreting your common sentiments, and I address a special thought to Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re and Bishop Giulio Sanguineti of Brescia who have accompanied you.

You have wished to come to Rome to the tomb of the Apostle Peter for a most exalted conclusion to the centenary year of "La Scuola" publishers. Your institution was founded in May 1904 by a group of lay Catholics, including the father of Pope Paul VI, Giorgio Montini, and by some priests.

Throughout the century, even in the changing social and cultural situations, it has always sought to be faithful to the plan and goals of its founders.

2. With you, I thank the Lord, Giver of all good things, for inspiring this initiative and for sustaining it in difficult times, such as those of the air raids in which a bomb destroyed your publishing house during the Second World War. With God's help and the courage of so many generous people, it was possible to start again. My appreciation and gratitude is addressed to them, as well as to all who, in the course of a century, have contributed their work and ideas.

I would then like to say a special word of praise to everyone who has worked to enable the publishing house to stay faithful to its founding ideals. As you know, it was conceived and desired as a means of guaranteeing Italian schools a Christian inspiration. This was no easy undertaking, given the general attitude of the culture of the day. But you continue on the course you have set. The truth about Christ, presented with respect for the outlook of others and witnessed to with

consistency in one's own life, is a good for all who are actively involved in schools: parents and children, teachers and students, State schools and private schools.

3. The centenary you are celebrating is also an opportunity to cast a glance at the future. There is no lack of trials and problems. The Church depends on you to prepare the appropriate school curriculum for the education of the new generations. In communion with your Bishop and in cordial dialogue with the Italian Catholic community, continue to be sowers of hope, ever faithful to the ideals of the founders.

The publishing house "La Scuola" has always been seen and followed by my Predecessors throughout the 20th century with confidence, affection and appreciation, and I wholeheartedly join them. I express the same hope that Paul VI expressed on 28 June 1965, when he received those in charge of it at the time at a special Audience. Paying them a tribute of warm gratitude for their consummate pedagogical expertise and deep sensitivity to the most modern school problems, he urged them "not only to preserve the efficiency achieved, but likewise the daring of new developments and new conquests" (*Insegnamenti* 3, 1965, p. 381).

With the same esteem and affection, I too encourage you to persevere in your work and, as I assure you of my special remembrance in prayer, I cordially bless you all.