



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO MEMBERS OF THE PONTIFICAL COMMISSION

FOR THE NEW VULGATE Friday, 27 April 1979 Your Excellency,

Dear Professors, Allow me first of all to express the great joy I feel today on receiving you here today for the official presentation of the Typical Edition of the New Vulgate version of the Bible. Mine is the same joy as is felt by one who can at last gather an abundant harvest, which was the object of long and loving care. At this moment, my thought cannot but go to the figure of the unforgettable Pope Paul VI, to whom is due all the merit and the honour for having undertaken this initiative, happily completed today, with the definitive publication, and for having followed and encouraged it, leading it to the threshold of its fulfilment. As a result of his sudden death and the even more unexpected death of the late Pope John Paul I, it has fallen upon me to promulgate for the whole Church the result of a labour which entirely preceded my pontificate. In any case, let our thanks go to the Lord, who never leaves his works unfinished. But special thanks go to you, leaders and members of the Pontifical Commission for the New Vulgate, and to all those who have put their competence, their time, their love, at the service of this enterprise, which is both a scientific and a pastoral one. You have long lavished your specialized knowledge and your indefatigable energies on behalf of a work, which will certainly remain for a long time as an eloquent sign of the careful solicitude of the Church for that written Divine Word, "from (whose) fullness have we all received" (Jn 1: 16), since it is "the message of salvation" (Acts 13:26). With the New Vulgate, the sons of the Church have now in their hands an additional instrument which, especially in the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy, will encourage a more certain and more precise approach to the sources of Revelation, offering itself also to scientific studies as an impressive new point of reference. If you allow me, I like to think that St Jerome also is pleased with this labour! The New Vulgate, in fact, is not only in the line of continuity more than of surpassing the work he carried out, but is also the product of an equal precision and an equal passion. Furthermore, the new linguistic and exegetical knowledge confer on the new version a stamp of reliability certainly not inferior to St Jerome's version, which stood the test of a millennium and a half of history. Certainly Jerome remains a master of doctrine and also of the Latin language, as well as of the spiritual life. He who, on the instructions of Pope Damasus, dedicated his whole life to study and meditation of the sacred text, certainly knows how much it costs, but also how exalting it is, to study the Scriptures lovingly. And it is certainly to be hoped that there will take place for many Christians what happened to him, and certainly also to you, according to his words to the virgin Eustochium: "Tenenti codicem somnus obrepat, et cadentem faciem pagina sancta suscipiat!" (Epist. 22, *ad Eust*). My wish is that this work which you have completed will be really fruitful for the life of the Church and that it will encourage more and more the salutary meeting of the faithful with the Lord, helping to satisfy that "thirst for the word" of which the prophet Amos speaks (8:11) and which seems particularly acute in our days. Let my cordial Apostolic Blessing accompany all of you as a sign of renewed gratitude and benevolence, and as a token of the abundant favours of the Lord, who knows how to reward his servants adequately. © Copyright 1979 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana
