



# The Holy See

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**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS  
POPE JOHN PAUL II  
TO THE "CIRCOLO SAN PIETRO"**

*Saturday, 21 June 1997*

*Dear Members of the "Circolo San Pietro",*

1. I am pleased to greet you at this welcome meeting that enables me once again to show my appreciation and gratitude to you for your generous commitment to serving the Holy See. This audience is taking place during the novena in preparation for the liturgical Solemnity of Sts Peter and Paul. In a certain sense, it enables us to have a foretaste of the joy of that feast, so significant for your worthy sodality and for the whole Church.

My affectionate thought first goes to your chaplain, Bishop Ettore Cunial, who has guided and supported your association for so many years with admirable zeal. I then thank your President, Marquis Marcello Sacchetti, for his kind words on behalf of you all and for his interesting description of the sodality's activities and projects. Lastly, I cordially greet each one of you present here, expressing my gratitude to Marquis Giovanni Serlupi Crescenzi for the generosity and spirit of faith with which he has led the Circolo for several years.

2. As has just been recalled, today you have gathered to present to me the "Peter's Pence" collected in the churches of Rome. I thank you for this concrete sign of solidarity and for the generous collaboration you offer me in charitable works for your brothers and sisters. Indeed, your act is, as it were, a meeting point between two complementary movements which converge in a single witness of Gospel charity. On the one hand it shows the affection of this city's inhabitants for the Successor of Peter, and on the other, it expresses the Pope's effective solidarity to the needy who live in Rome, whose gaze takes in the many situations of wretchedness and poverty that unfortunately persist in so many parts of the world.

By drawing close to the Roman parishes you have personally contacted the many pockets of poverty which still exist, but you have also been able to see how most people have a strong desire to know and love Christ. With your human and spiritual preparation, as well as meeting the needs of the less fortunate, you contribute to spreading a word of hope which flows from faith and love for the Lord, thus making yourselves heralds of his Gospel.

Charity and witness must therefore be the guidelines of your commitment. I encourage you to continue with constancy and generosity in your activity, inspired by perennial Christian values and drawing ever new energy from prayer and the spirit of sacrifice — as your motto says — in order to continue to bring abundant fruits of good to both the Christian community and to civil society.

3. As you know, the presentation of Mark's Gospel to all Roman families began last Lent, within the framework of the great city mission. It is a pressing invitation to spiritual, cultural and social renewal addressed to all contexts of life in the metropolis, in order to prepare properly for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000. I had the opportunity on the occasion of the solemn Vigil of Pentecost a year ago, to stress that "with this apostolic initiative the Church which is in Rome intends to open her arms to every person and family in the city and, like leaven, to penetrate every social context, work, suffering, art and culture, proclaiming and bearing witness to the risen Lord, to those both near and far" (*L'Osservatore Romano* English edition, 29 May 1996, n. 5, p. 2).

Dear members of the "Circolo San Pietro", I urge you to offer your qualified collaboration to this priority commitment of the whole diocesan community of Rome, with a view to the Jubilee. May you know how to be generous missionaries of the Gospel, proclaiming it in the various contexts to which your appreciated social assistance and charitable activities are addressed. Continue in the path of the Roman people's great tradition of hospitality, which your President appropriately mentioned in his speech. Try to be a concrete sign of the Pope's charity to those in need, both in the material and the spiritual sense, as well as to the pilgrims who will come here from all parts of the world for the Jubilee.

I entrust your activities and resolutions to the motherly protection of the Most Holy Virgin, *Salus Populi Romani*, that she may guide your steps, making you workers of solidarity and peace in the daily life of the city and its citizens. With these sentiments, as I invoke the heavenly intercession of Sts Peter and Paul, I cordially impart a special Apostolic Blessing to each one of you, to your families and to all those whom you assist.

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