



The Holy See

VISIT TO THE CAPITOLINE HILL,
THE SEAT OF ROME'S MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS
POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO THE ROMAN CITIZENS**

*Loggia of the Senatorial Palace on the Capitoline Hill
Thursday, 15 January 1998*

*Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Citizens of Rome,*

1. I just met in the Senatorial Palace those who serve in various capacities in the municipal administration. Now, from the top of Michelangelo's stairway, from this hill on which Cicero saw the "rock of all nations" (*Catil.* 4, 6, 11), it is the whole of Rome to which I would like to extend a warm and cordial embrace.

Dear Romans, we can well describe today's visit as historic: together we are writing another page of hopes and plans in the annals of Rome, the civil and spiritual capital to which all mankind looks. Thank you for coming and for your welcome, which confirms and enriches our friendship. Thank you for your sincere and enthusiastic greeting to the Pope, who has come to visit the Capitoline, the home of all Romans and therefore his as well. The Lord, who wished to put him at the head of the Catholic Church, has thus made him a "Roman", a "civis romanus", a sharer in the joys and sufferings, the expectations and achievements of this splendid city. *Totius orbis urbs celeberrima*. In Kraków they used to say: "Cracovia totius Poloniae urbs celeberrima". Here we must say: "Totius orbis, orbis terrarum, urbs celeberrima". But how well known is Latin today?

2. My thoughts turn to all Romans, first of all to you boys and girls, who are the future of Rome: I say to you, love your city! Be proud of its history and its spiritual vocation; be ready to build a future worthy of its glorious past.

I affectionately greet you who are suffering in body and spirit, and are going through difficult times: may you find support

in the traditional spirit of solidarity that distinguishes the people of Rome.

I cordially greet you, Roman citizens, who belong to other religious traditions: you, Jews, heirs to the faith of Abraham, who for centuries have shared in the spiritual and civil life of Rome; you, brothers and sisters of other Christian confessions; you, believers of the Muslim religion. May common adoration of the Most High foster mutual respect and make you all active builders of an open and united society.

I respectfully greet you, brothers and sisters, who say that you have a nonreligious view of life, and those of you who are searching for the meaning of life: may love for the truth, moral rigour and peaceful dialogue with believers help make Rome a model of respectful harmony between men and women of different religions and ideals.

I look with friendship on you, brothers and sisters from distant countries, who have recently become part of city life: may your presence enrich the hospitable and peaceful face of Rome.

Lastly, I extend my fatherly greeting to you, Roman brothers and sisters, and to your families: remain faithful to the undying values of our civilization, enlivened by the Catholic faith.

As we prepare to cross the threshold of the Great Jubilee, may we be sustained by the memory of the martyrs, the saints and all who down the centuries have contributed to Rome's greatness. It is a memory of freedom, fidelity and civilization. It must continue to live in the hearts of those dwell in the Rome of the third millennium. This is the hope, this is the prayer that I offer to God as I invoke his protection on these people who are dear to me and whom I bless with all my heart.

Roma felix! Fortunate Rome!

Before taking his leave of the people gathered on the Capitoline Hill, the Pope said:

If Providence allows me to be in Cuba on Thursday next week, I should remember: a week ago I was at the Capitoline. Take courage! Praised be Jesus Christ! Goodbye!

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