



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO ARCHBISHOP JUKKA PAARMA,
LUTHERAN EVANGELICAL ARCHBISHOP
OF TURKU AND FINLAND**

Monday, 18 January 1999

Dear Archbishop Paarma,

It is a special joy for me to welcome you to the Vatican so soon after your appointment as Archbishop of Turku and Finland. The visit I made in 1989 to the Cathedral of Turku and to the home of your predecessor, Archbishop John Vikström, is still vividly etched in my mind. That was an event that greatly strengthened the relations between the Lutheran Church of Finland and the Catholic Church.

Your presence here today is a positive sign that these relations will continue to become ever stronger as we strive to move forward in our joint quest for the restoration of that unity which Jesus Christ desires for his followers. As the Third Christian Millennium rapidly approaches, we are conscious of the need to commit ourselves ever more firmly and irrevocably to the noble goal of Christian unity, and we are aware of the beneficial effects that this unity will have on the new evangelization of Europe and the world.

Upon you and all those under your pastoral care I invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God.