



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE MEMBERS
OF THE "CIRCOLO SAN PIETRO"**

Monday, 29 March 1999

Dear members of the "Circolo San Pietro"!

1. I am once again delighted to be with you at our now traditional meeting, which this year also gives me the welcome opportunity to express my pleasure and gratitude for your devotion to the poor and your diligent service to the Church and the Pope.

As I cordially welcome each of you, I affectionately greet your spiritual director, Archbishop Ettore Cunial, tireless and zealous guide of the association, and your President, Marquis Marcello Sacchetti, whom I thank for his courteous words on behalf of you all. In his address he wished to describe the interesting and praiseworthy initiatives of your worthy sodality, which is celebrating its 130th anniversary this year.

2. One of the many activities that distinguish your institution is the "Peter's Pence" collection in the churches of Rome, which today you have come here to offer: may the Lord reward you for this act of practical concern for the Apostolic See!

In this third year of preparation for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, the year dedicated to God the Father, several times I have had the occasion to invite Christians to speak on behalf of the world's poor and to stress more forcefully the Church's preferential option for the marginalized (cf. *Tertio millennio adveniente*, n. 51).

I hope that every baptized person will feel prompted by a generous sense of charity, in the likeness of the extraordinary love with which the Father gave his Only-begotten Son for the world's salvation. It means welcoming this wonderful divine example as a gift of grace, remembering Jesus' words: "*It is more blessed to give than to receive*" (Acts 20:35).

Through your commitment to solidarity, recently enriched by the inauguration of the Hospitality

Centre for giving free care to the terminally ill who are particularly poor, and through your service to the Apostolic See, you are called to be instruments of God's tender love for every person.

Dear friends, see that your activity is always enlivened by constant reference to Jesus' example: as he cured bodily illnesses, to which poverty can certainly be likened at times, he revealed in his delicate and loving attitude the Father's merciful face.

3. John the Evangelist says: "*No man has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us*" (1 Jn 4:12). The Word of God reminds us that this is our mission: to share the divine love with others through our fraternal and helpful love. Whenever a gesture, a word, a smile, a helping hand, an attentive presence express genuine love, they can easily become effective and fruitful occasions to enkindle or strengthen the flame of faith for their beneficiaries. So much good can be done even with simple and humble acts!

May the Lord help you in your daily work. May the heavenly Father fill you with an abundant outpouring of graces, so that, in carrying out your work, you can radiate serenity and confidence and make a tangible contribution to the work of the new evangelization, to which all believers are called in a special way on the threshold of the third Christian millennium.

With these sentiments, as I again express my gratitude for your visit today and for your ecclesial service, I invoke upon you the heavenly protection of Mary, "*Salus Populi Romani*", and of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, as I cordially impart a special Blessing to each of you and to your families.