



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PILGRIMS FROM VARIOUS ITALIAN REGIONS
AND ASSOCIATIONS AND MEMBERS
OF THE APOSTOLIC PENITENTIARY**

*Saturday, 1 April 2000 Dear Brothers and Sisters!*1. I am pleased to extend a cordial welcome to each of you gathered at the tomb of Peter to celebrate the Jubilee of the Incarnation of Christ the Saviour. I would first like to greet you, dear faithful taking part in the pilgrimage of the Pastoral Region of the Abruzzi and Molise, and especially your Bishops, with the priests and religious who have accompanied you. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever" (*Heb* 13: 8). This profession of faith is the essential reason why you have crossed the threshold of the Holy Door. With this act of devotion, you have renewed your fidelity to Christ, our Redeemer, and strengthened your commitment to the new evangelization. For this you must constantly deepen your understanding of the faith and put it into practice according to the needs of our time, while at the same time taking full advantage of various forms of popular piety. The Jubilee is a fitting occasion for strengthening your ecclesial communion, which gives rise to the solidarity that is so necessary today. May families, young people and those who are marked by forms of poverty and marginalization be the special object of your concern. Thus you will make the Gospel message credible and you will build up hope.2. I extend a cordial welcome to you, dear faithful from the Pastoral Region of Calabria, who with your Pastors have wished to meet the Successor of Peter during the celebration of your Jubilee. This year of the Lord's special mercy and the Lenten season we are observing invite us to turn our gaze to the Cross, the basis of our Christian hope. It is from the Cross of Christ that we can draw strength to give meaning and value to all our actions. How appropriate it is that the Cross of young people is traveling through various Italian Dioceses in this time of preparation for World Youth Day! I would like to tell you, young people of Calabria, and all Calabrians: do not succumb to fear, but by contemplating Christ crucified and drawing from the unfathomable riches that flow from his Heart, set out in the new millennium and offer everyone the effective witness of charity, forgiveness and mercy!3. I now greet you, dear faithful of the Archdiocese of Trent, together with Archbishop Luigi Bressan and the priests and religious. Your pilgrimage to the tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul is prompted by the wish to give new zeal and enthusiasm to religious practice in your land. The Catholic faith spread from Trent, the "City of the Council", throughout Christianity with renewed vigour, inspiring plans and projects of reform which enriched it with holiness, good works and fervour. Welcome this same faith and pass it on with enthusiasm. Always be faithful to Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life, and become his heralds, courageous witnesses and the promoters of authentic spiritual and social renewal in your Archdiocese.4. My thoughts now turn to the faithful of the Diocese of Jesi who, with their pilgrimage, want to prepare themselves for celebrating the Fourth Diocesan Eucharistic Congress and, at the same time, to mark the 25th anniversary of the episcopal ordination of their Pastor, Bishop Oscar Serfilippi. I offer him my

affectionate embrace and fraternal wishes that his ministry will bear abundant apostolic fruit. Dear brothers and sisters, may your meditation on the mystery of the Eucharist help you to understand ever more deeply the place that the Eucharistic mystery has in your life as a Church. In particular, I invite families to see the Eucharist as the source of their harmony and unity. Thus they will be ready to accept the gift of life with joy, to grow in mutual love and to surmount their daily problems with prayer and forgiveness.⁵ I would next like to offer an affectionate greeting to Bishop Germano Zaccheo of Casale and the diocesan pilgrimage he is leading. Dear faithful, I trust that your coming to Rome to the tombs of the Apostles will help you to rediscover the value of baptismal grace and the joy of belonging to the Church, the Body of Christ. I am convinced that this rediscovery will spur you to be joyful heralds of the Gospel message in every context. In a special way I encourage you to proclaim the Gospel in the world of work, and to work so that everyone will have a job and perform it in an atmosphere of respect for the rights and dignity of the human person.⁶ I also thank you for your presence, dear prelates and officials of the Apostolic Penitentiary, ordinary and extraordinary Father Confessors of the city's Patriarchal Basilicas and those attending the course on the internal forum conducted by the Apostolic Penitentiary. The ministry of Penance is very precious and requires clarity of doctrine and pastoral compassion, proper training and constant availability. I express my sincere gratitude to you for your generous dedication in carrying out your work, and I take this occasion to urge those attending the course and all priests to make the most of the sacrament of Penance, especially during the Jubilee Holy Year.⁷ Dear members of the Italian Association of the Perpetual Rosary who have come to Rome for your Jubilee pilgrimage: thank you for your visit. I congratulate you and the Dominican Fathers who are guiding you on your spiritual journey. Your praiseworthy sodality, founded a century ago by Fr Costanzo Becchi of the Order of Preachers, aims at promoting an intense devotion to Jesus in the Eucharist and to the Mother of the Lord, through adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and the sweet prayer of the Rosary. Continue to spread love for the Lord Jesus, who in the Eucharist remains for ever among his followers in the Church. Recite the Holy Rosary and spread this practice wherever you go. It is a prayer that introduces us to the school of the lived Gospel; it teaches piety to hearts, makes you persevere in goodness, prepares you for life and, above all, endears you to Mary most holy.⁸ Lastly, my cordial thoughts turn to you, dear pilgrims of the Society "At the Service of Divine Mercy". Always spread and make known everywhere the tenderness of "God, who is rich in mercy" (*Eph 2: 4*). May God's love sustain you and help you to be apostles of forgiveness and reconciliation. As a pledge of abundant heavenly graces upon you, your families and your communities, I cordially impart a special Apostolic Blessing to you present and to all the other pilgrims gathered today in St Peter's Square for this welcome meeting. © Copyright 2000 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana