



The Holy See

***GREETING OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PARTICIPANTS AT THE PROCESSION
IN HONOR OF MARY
FOR THE JUBILEE OF THE SICK AND HEALTH CARE WORKERS***

February 11, 2000

This impressive torchlight procession, which set out from Castel Sant'Angelo and moved down Via della Conciliazione, closes this day entirely dedicated to Our Lady. The evocative sight offered by the long parade of torches calls to mind the procession being held at more or less the same time in Lourdes, Mary's citadel, where so many pilgrims, healthy or sick, have an intense and consoling spiritual experience.

Mary guides and lights our way, dear brothers and sisters, whom I greet with great affection. Mary, our most tender Mother, accompanies us in joy and in sorrow, in good times and in those of physical and spiritual trial, in order to help us in every circumstance to say our "yes" to God's will. This morning in St Peter's Square, we celebrated the Jubilee of the Sick and Health-Care Workers. This evening we have returned to ask Mary, "Health of the Sick", to make the Holy Year a true "year of grace". May the Immaculate Virgin help everyone to experience, "through sincere conversion of heart, the abundance of God's mercy and the joy of a fuller communion with their brothers and sisters, the first fruits of endless joy in heaven" (*Prayer to Mary, Health of the Sick*).

Dear brothers and sisters, as I entrust you to the protection of the Blessed Virgin, I give you, your families and all your loved ones a special Blessing, which I gladly extend to all who are united with us in spirit, especially those at the Grotto of Lourdes and at other Marian shrines.

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