



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II TO JUBILEE PILGRIMS

*Saturday, 26 August 2000 Dear Brothers and Sisters!*¹. In coming to Rome for your Jubilee pilgrimage, you wanted to include a stop here in Castel Gandolfo to greet the Successor of Peter. Thank you for your affectionate thought! I am grateful for the visit and extend my cordial welcome to each of you. You come from various regions; you bring with you the inner desire to participate more intensely in the special spiritual favours of the Holy Year and have decided to renew your commitment of faith to the Son of God, the 2,000th anniversary of whose birth we are celebrating. I first of all greet Archbishop Enrico Masseroni of Vercelli, Archbishop emeritus Tarcisio Bertone, Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and Bishop Giulio Nicolini of Cremona, who have led the pilgrims of their respective diocesan communities. I greet all those who have accompanied them: the priests, consecrated persons, pastoral workers, families, young people and all who share the same passion for the Gospel in their daily pastoral activity. Through you, dear brothers and sisters, I extend a cordial greeting to your respective Dioceses.² Dear faithful of Vercelli, your visit to the holy places, to the memorials of the Apostles Peter and Paul, has a twofold purpose. It is an intense moment of prayer on the eve of the resumption of diocesan activities in their various forms, and is, at the same time, a significant act by which you intend to confirm together, as pastors and Christian people, your shared fidelity to Christ. On your return, a "pastoral September" awaits you, a month of meetings and planning to focus on several joint apostolic programmes. First, you have at heart the activity of parishes, called to be true and proper frontiers of evangelization that can adapt to changing social situations. In fact, the life-giving power of the Gospel, which can renew the lives of all who are prepared to accept it, first passes through this important ecclesial link. This task requires courage and prudence, a holy life and tireless dedication to proclaiming the Good News through catechesis, liturgical life and the witness of charity. Another goal of your efforts is to continue on the path you have been taking for three years for a pastoral activity focused on families, which are "sent" to evangelize other families. The recent, unforgettable [World Youth Day](#) also shows you how important it is "to speak of Jesus Christ to the world of youth". I hope that the "school of youth ministry" to which you have given life will increasingly be an instrument for helping the younger generation to draw close to the Redeemer, and that in him they will find the deep meaning of their commitment and the inexhaustible source of their happiness. Parish, families, young people: these are primary contexts calling for special attention, generous dedication and constant missionary zeal on everyone's part. May the Blessed Virgin Mary support you in your efforts and may St Eusebius, your patron and a fearless defender of the orthodoxy of the faith in the Church of his time, intercede for you.³ My thoughts now turn to you, dear faithful of Cremona and, with special affection, to the members of the Italian Sports Centre who have come here by bicycle or on foot. Your second Jubilee pilgrimage is taking place in the atmosphere of and in spiritual continuity with the [15th World Youth Day](#) and the [Jubilee of Young People](#), which included a thousand young people from Cremona. In the

light of the Gospel, I applied to that moving event, filled with deep spiritual intensity, the definition "school of faith". Today I would like to apply the same image to this meeting of ours. May it encourage you to strengthen your faith and Christian witness, which this morning, after passing through the Holy Door, you professed with great fervour at the tomb of the Apostle Peter: faith in Christ, the Son of God, and in his one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. May this Roman experience sustain your witness to the Gospel and be your guide in the new pastoral year which the Diocese is about to begin with the theme: "Rediscovering the Lord's Day so that the Holy Year will never end". I am pleased to know that all your Jubilee churches are dedicated to Mary. Among them I remember your splendid cathedral and the Marian shrine of Our Lady of the Fountain at Caravaggio, which I visited in 1992 and where I left some of my heart. With particular affection I therefore entrust to Mary the journey of the Church in Cremona at the turn of the century and the millennium, which has already been marked by abundant graces.⁴ With the same sentiments of affection, I would now like to address the faithful from the parishes of St Laurence in Manerbio (Brescia), St Joseph the Worker in Turin, St Frances Cabrini in Codogno (Lodi), and the other individual pilgrims and families who have wished to join our meeting. Dear brothers and sisters, may this intense spiritual moment, which you are certainly having the grace to experience on the occasion of your Jubilee, be an incentive to you to be strong in faith, joyful in hope and persevering in charity. May you always be witnesses to Gospel joy and fraternal solidarity. Dear friends, may God fill you with his merciful love. I accompany you with my prayer, while I cordially impart a special Blessing to you, to your loved ones and to your respective communities.

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