



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II TO ITALIAN GOVERNMENT WORKERS AND OTHER GROUPS

Saturday, 25 November 2000

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

1. I affectionately greet all of you who have come for your Jubilee celebration to the tomb of Peter, on this eve of the feast of Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. According to the images in the Book of Revelation, Christ is "the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (Rv 22: 13). As the true "King of the Universe", he governs and renews everything so that in the end he can "deliver" the world to the Father, "that God may be everything to every one" (1 Cor 15: 28). Today, dear friends, you come to entrust your lives to him anew. Do all you can so that his kingship may be seen in your effort to live the realities of the world by transfiguring them with the love and praise of God.

I cordially greet the Cardinal Vicar, Camillo Ruini, who celebrated the Eucharist, and I thank him for the words which he addressed to me on behalf of all. Together with him I greet the Bishops, priests, and religious present.

2. My thoughts now turn to you, who are making your pilgrimage as employees of various constitutional bodies of the Italian Republic: the Presidency of the Republic and that of the Council of Ministers, the Senate of the Republic, the Chamber of Deputies and the State Audit Court. I cordially greet you all.

Recently, during the Jubilee of Government Leaders, Members of Parliament and Politicians, I had occasion to extol the nobility of politics, stressing the need for it to be lived with great spiritual inspiration, competence and morality. Today I am pleased to address you, who assist the work of the politicians and government leaders. With your stable service within the institutions, you are called to guarantee their continuity, professional tone and moral standards.

3. Your work actually goes beyond the frontiers of your individual offices and contributes to the overall functioning of an institutional apparatus that is of primary importance for the common good. This is especially the aim of the service rendered to the nation by the Presidency of the Republic and the service of government carried out by the Presidency of

the Council of Ministers. Of no less importance is the role that the Senate of the Republic and the Chamber of Deputies plays in exercising the legislative function, as well as the role of guarantee carried out by the Constitutional Court regarding the conformity of laws to the *charta magna* of the Republic, and that of controlling the management of public finances performed by the State Audit Court.

You are in a certain way privileged individuals by working in such prestigious sectors. And yet it is easy to understand that even in your professional life there is no lack of difficulties and challenges. In yours, as in every other human sector, daily reality is always far from ideal, and perhaps sometimes you too, overcome by lack of confidence, are tempted to give yourselves up to "routine". Do not yield to this temptation! Always put your heart into even the most bureaucratic work. Always think of the people, their problems and sufferings, even when you have to deal with them only through papers and numbers, articles of law and arid regulations. Make your work an area of true humanity and an occasion for moral growth. A disciple of Christ is never permitted to sink into mediocrity: every job can be a way of holiness.

4. Among the virtues that must shine in you, there is undoubtedly your loyalty to the institutions which you are called to serve in full respect for the primacy of God: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (cf. Mk 12: 17).

This shining evangelical principle has directed the Church since her origins, prompting her to foster great respect for civil institutions. In them and in the men and women responsible for them, we can see a sign of the presence of God who guides historical events. *Omnis potestas a Deo* (Rom 13: 1): all authority comes from God. Founded on this is the duty of respect that is owed to the law and to those who exercise authority.

Everything however must always be subject to God's sovereignty, to the extent that anything that goes against his law can in no way become binding. The Christian must be a steadfast witness to this principle, going, if and when necessary, "against the tide". He will thus find strength in prayer. Like the first community of Rome at the beginning of the second century, may believers invoke divine help for all those with public responsibilities, so that the Lord may direct their decisions according to what is good and pleasing in his sight (cf. *First Letter of Clement*, 61).

5. I now greet you, dear workers in the world of transport, employees of ATAC, other companies in Lazio and throughout Italy. Yours is a vast reality, with a busy network of services that see you involved every day for the benefit of the citizens. In this year of the Great Jubilee you have been especially well-deserving for the welcome you have given numerous pilgrims: for this I sincerely thank you.

Public transport, in the current conditions of more intense movement of persons and often chaotic traffic, is destined to carry out a role of growing importance. There is a widespread need, from an ecological and human point of view, to guarantee greater "liveability" in our cities. Our countrysides should not be further disturbed or polluted, and the human dimension of cities should be protected. And does all this not depend on the way that transport is organized? How important this is for Rome, given its joint role as capital of Italy and centre of Christianity, does not need to be demonstrated.

In fact, the pilgrims and tourists who come from far away, before becoming immersed in the history, art and religious

significance of Rome, for the most part come in contact with you. Your readiness, cordiality and efficiency are in a way the Eternal City's visiting card.

Certainly, who cannot imagine the difficulties that can make your service burdensome? Do your best to perform it, in spite of everything, as a true act of love. It is precisely to this that you commit yourselves in opening your hearts to the Jubilee grace that Christ gives you today. For the people you transport may you be so many "christophers", *bearers of Christ*, who wants to be met and treated with love in each person, especially in the poorest (cf. Mt 25: 35).

6. I am pleased now to greet the members of the ANSA Agency club. The role of your agency in the panorama of information is well known. Your presence spurs me to pray that the Lord will enlighten those who work in this sector and help them to carry out their service in the best possible way. Today their service has become particularly demanding and full of responsibility, due to the general conditions of the mass media system and the often excessive influence exerted by a few large holders of informational power.

Together with you I extend my welcome to the numerous other groups present: parish groups, school groups and associations of various types and from different places. Dear friends, I hope that you will live this Jubilee as a time of conversion and inner renewal. Christ asks you to follow his Gospel with greater strength and to translate it into a consistent witness. Trust in him! Before the tempting siren call of a culture that, when it abandons him, vainly promises true and lasting happiness, tell him with the conviction of the Apostle Peter: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life!" (Jn 6: 68).

May Mary, Mother of the Church, obtain for us that Christ, King of the Universe, may be the king of our hearts, our families and our communities. In the name of the Lord, I bless you all!

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