



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PILGRIMS
FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE OF NAPLES**

Saturday, 6 December 2006

1. Welcome, dear pilgrims of the Archdiocese of Naples! I affectionately greet you all.

I greet first of all and thank your Bishop, Cardinal Michele Giordano, who has expressed your common sentiments and your spiritual closeness on the occasion of my 25th Anniversary of Pontificate. I renew to him my fraternal best wishes for his recent 50th anniversary celebration of ordination to the priesthood, expressing cordial best wishes for a favourable pastoral ministry.

I greet the Auxiliary Bishops and the civil Authorities, priests, deacons, Religious, young people and families present at today's gathering. My thought then goes to your entire City, placed as a crossroad, as the Archbishop has well recalled, of those persons that constructed the history of the European Continent.

2. I vividly recall the Visit that the Lord allowed me to make to Naples 13 years ago in November. From the various meetings with social and religious figures, I was given the impression of a City marked by, yes, difficulties and problems, but filled with interior resources and the capacity to nobly make courageous and generous gestures.

I think especially to the meeting with the thousands of youth in the "St Paul" Stadium and the "Overseas Exhibit Hall", where I said: *"It is up to you, the young witnesses of the civilization of love, to bring the proclamation of Gospel hope especially to your peers, because in you the Church of the next millennium is already alive"* (*Speech to Youth in Naples*, 10 November 1990; *L'Osservatore Romano* English Edition [ORE], 19 November, p. 5).

3. I renew these words today and address them ideally to your entire Archdiocese.

To proclaim and witness the "Gospel of hope" is part of the missionary mandate of every Christian community. It is a most-evident priority in your pastoral programmes, which point out the *family* and *young people* as guidelines of diocesan apostolic action.

"Together for mission": this is the password that unites you in an effort aimed at allowing "the proclamation of Christian hope" to resound in the city of Naples.

So that your work of evangelization may be effective, you must never cease to draw vital sap from an intense prayer life. It is also necessary that the parishes, as was highlighted in one of your recent meetings, continue to become "families of families", permanent schools of faith and prayer, homes of communion and encounter, of dialogue and openness to the territory.

May the Lord guide your steps with the strength of his Spirit. May the Virgin Mary, Queen of the Rosary, protect you, and may St Januarius, your august Patron, intercede for you.

While assuring you of a constant remembrance in the Lord, I cordially bless you.