



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE PLENARY MEETING OF THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS

25 March 2003

Your Eminences,

Your Excellencies,

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, I am pleased to greet you, the Members, Consultors, Staff and Experts of the *Pontifical Council for Social Communications*, as you come together for your plenary meeting. Indeed, it is appropriate that your gathering takes place during the week in which the Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Annunciation, when the Good News of our salvation in Jesus Christ was announced by the Angel Gabriel to Mary. This Good News is to be shared by all peoples of all times and places, and it is your precise duty to make it ever more effectively present in the world of the media. I thank you for your commitment in this regard and encourage you to persevere in it. There is no question that the media today exercise a most powerful and pervasive influence, forming and informing public opinion on a local, national and global scale. As we reflect on this fact, a passage from Saint Paul's Letter to the Ephesians comes to mind: "Let every one speak the truth with his neighbour, for we are members one of another" (4:25). These words of the Apostle form an apt summary of what should be two basic aims of modern social communications: *making the truth ever more widely known, and increasing solidarity within the human family*. Forty years ago, my predecessor Blessed Pope John XXIII had something similar in mind when, in his Encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, he called for "fairness and impartiality" in the use of the "instruments for the promotion and spread of mutual understanding between nations" (No. 90). I myself took up this same theme in my recent message for the Thirty-seventh World Day of Social Communications, to be celebrated on 1 June 2003. In that message I noted that "the fundamental moral requirement of all communications is respect for and service of the *truth*". I then went on to explain: "Freedom to seek and speak what is true is essential to human communication, not only in relation to facts and information but also, and especially, regarding the nature and destiny of the human person, regarding society and the common good, regarding our relationship with God" (No. 3). In fact, truth and solidarity are two of the most efficacious means available for overcoming hatred, resolving conflict and eliminating violence. They are also indispensable for re-establishing and strengthening the mutual bonds of understanding, trust and compassion that unite all individuals, peoples and nations, regardless of their ethnic or cultural origin. In short, *truth and solidarity are necessary if humanity is to succeed in building a culture of life, a civilization of love, a world of peace*. This is the challenge facing the men and women of the media, and it is the task of your Pontifical

Council to assist and guide them in responding positively and effectively to this obligation. I pray that your efforts in this regard will continue to bear much fruit. During this Year of the Rosary, I entrust you all to the loving intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary: may her faith-filled response to the Angel, which gave the world its Saviour, serve as a model for our own proclamation of the saving message of her Son. As a pledge of grace and strength in the Word-made-flesh I cordially impart to you my Apostolic Blessing.

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