



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE MEMBERS OF THE "CIRCOLO SAN PIETRO"

Friday, 23 April 2004

Dear Members of the Circolo San Pietro,

1. I am pleased to welcome you and I offer you a cordial greeting. I extend my thoughts to your relatives and friends and to all who work with you in your various charitable activities. I greet with affection your chaplain, Archbishop Ettore Cunial, as well as your President, Marquis Marcello Sacchetti, whom I thank for his kind words on behalf of those present.

You carry out a precious mission with admirable apostolic zeal. By going out to meet the poor and bringing relief to the sick and the suffering, you witness concretely to that *"creativity in charity"* I suggested in the Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (cf. n. 50).

Peter's Pence, which you have come to present to me as you do every year, is a further sign of your openness to our brothers and sisters in distress. At the same time, it implies concrete participation in the commitment of the Apostolic See to respond to the increasingly urgent needs of the Church, especially in the poorest countries.

2. Dear brothers and sisters, I am once again pleased to express my deep appreciation for your commitment, inspired by convinced fidelity and attachment to the Successor of Peter. You foster it by pausing every day to pray and listen to the Word of God. It is particularly important that your life be centred on the mystery of the Eucharist. Fidelity to Christ is the secret of the effectiveness of our every project. This is the witness of the saints. I am thinking especially of the Servants of God whom I will have the joy of beatifying next Sunday. By following their example, may each one of you intensify your missionary zeal and prepare to be a "Good Samaritan" to all those who today live in conditions of hardship or neglect.

May the Virgin Mary also accompany you with her motherly protection. For my part, I assure you of my prayers for those who are present here, for those who help you in your various activities and for all those whom you meet in your daily apostolate, and with affection I impart to you a special Apostolic Blessing.