



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO Mr JOHANNES RAU
PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY***

Saturday, 6 March 2004

*Distinguished Mr President,*1. With pleasure I welcome you, your wife and your entourage to the Vatican. You are visiting me in order to communicate the cordial relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Holy See. Mr President, please accept my grateful acknowledgment in return!2. Germany presents itself to Europe and to the world with the wealth of its *Länder*. The Republic's federal structure blends your region's various cultural traditions into a harmonious whole, rich in incentive, so that some of its fundamental features may be considered to be a model for the united peoples of Europe. The common spiritual-cultural heritage of the Continent undoubtedly also includes Christianity. The *Länder* States of Germany are rich in extraordinary manifestations of the Christian faith, which also offer many people today a direction and give a dimension to life, thus shaping coexistence. Indeed, the Christians who enter politics share in the responsibility to ensure that this precious Christian heritage can continue to enrich society in Germany and in all of Europe.3. Today Germany enjoys a good reputation in every part of the world. This is primarily due to the fact that the Germans are ready to allow people in countries with economic difficulties to share in their well-being. For this reason, the Federal Republic from the start has made available considerable funds for development aid. Added to this is the generous support the German State also offers through Church-assistance organizations to countless viable projects for human advancement and also to the people involved in the less well-off countries. Many have gratefully experienced the fact that the Germans think not only of themselves and their own problems, but also place great importance on justice, solidarity and education, not only at home but anywhere in the world.4. Distinguished Mr President, I hope that the patronage and the trust shown by your visit today may increase the cooperation between the State and the Church in Germany, the good relationships between the Federal Republic, the *Länder* and the Holy See, so that they can continually deepen. I heartily implore for you personally, for your collaborators, for all the inhabitants of the Federal Republic of Germany and, not the least, for your family, the abundant Blessing of

God.

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