The Holy See

LETTER OF JOHN PAUL II
TO ARCHBISHOP PAUL JOSEF CORDES

To my Venerable Brother
Archbishop Paul Josef Cordes
President of the Pontifical Council "Cor Unum"

In these days when we are preparing to celebrate the Easter feasts, Europe is unfortunately experiencing another very sad moment in its history. The agonizing conflict that has broken out in Kosovo is causing people unspeakable suffering and sowing hatred, violence and death. The consequences are tragic, especially for the many families which have been destroyed and for the countless refugees forced to flee, abandoning their homes and all their possessions. I am closely following the developing situation and in my prayer I beg the Lord, our merciful Father, to take pity on his children who are so harshly tried. I call upon Mary, Queen of Peace, to instil in those responsible and in every person of good will courageous intentions of reconciliation and peace.

To give practical expression to the Pope's closeness to the victims of this tragedy, I am sending you, Venerable Brother, as President of the Holy See's dicastery responsible for humanitarian aid in Albania, to bring the refugees of this terrible tragedy the contribution of my spiritual and material solidarity and that of the entire Christian people. It is accompanied and enhanced by a priceless gift from the many sick and suffering persons who are generously praying for peace and offering their sacrifices for this intention.

Tell the children, the mothers and the elderly people you meet that the Pope is with them and will always be with them, until a just and lasting peace prevails in the Balkans. These people have seen too much blood and too many tears shed in this 20th century. May the longed-for day of peace come at last. To the refugees, especially those suffering the most, please bring the comfort of my Blessing, which I cordially extend to you and to all who are involved in the valued rescue work.

From the Vatican, 30 March 1999.

JOHN PAUL II