



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PRAEFECT OF THE CONGREGATION
FOR THE ORIENTAL CHURCHES**

*To my venerable Brother
Cardinal Achille Silvestrini
Praefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches*

As the Pontifical Mission for Palestine gathers in Bethlehem, Amman and Beirut to celebrate the Fiftieth Anniversary of its foundation, I send greetings through you to all those involved in the Mission's service of charity, and I assure them of my prayers for the continuing success of the work which they so admirably do in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Founded in the troubled times which followed the end of the Second World War, the Mission sought at first to assist refugees and displaced persons. Since then the Holy Land has been troubled in other ways, so that the need for the Mission's work has not grown less but has changed in character. By the grace of God and the support of so many people, the Mission has been greatly successful in serving the peoples of the region by providing aid to a growing network of educational, medical and social institutions which seek to heal the wounds of conflict and violence. I pray fervently that the Mission's witness of solidarity will continue to ensure the integral development of the peoples of the region, so that peace may finally reign in the land which the Lord himself so loved.

Entrusting the work of the Mission to the protection of Mary, the Great Mother of God, I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing to the President of the Pontifical Mission, Monsignor Robert Stern, and to the staff, benefactors and associates.

From the Vatican, November 22, 1999

IOANNES PAULUS II
