



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE MEMBERS
OF THE BOARD AND COUNCIL OF THE LAZIO REGION**

Saturday, 16 January 1999

*Mr President of the Regional Board,
Mr President of the Regional Council,
Distinguished Board and Council Members,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

1. I am very pleased to extend a welcome to each of you who, following a happy and well-established tradition, have wished to meet me at the beginning of the New Year. I thank you for your presence and offer fervent wishes for prosperity and peace to the Lazio Region, to yourselves and to your relatives.

In particular, I greet the President of the Regional Council, the Hon. Luca Borgomeo. I am also pleased to express my deep gratitude to the Hon. Piero Badaloni, President of the Regional Board, for his courteous words on behalf of you all and of those you represent.

Your region, with its praiseworthy institutions, its unique human and Christian patrimony, the lights and shadows of its daily life, will soon be called - as the President stressed - to face the extraordinary event of the Great Jubilee of the Holy Year 2000. I am aware of the efforts which for several years now the Regional Administration has been making in preparation for this deadline. I hope that the initiatives proposed will be able to offer pilgrims a hospitality worthy of the region's universal vocation and of the signs of faith found in it.

2. The Jubilee is a spiritual event which primarily concerns the life of believers. However, everyone knows that the importance of Christ's birth for all humanity, the living and active presence of Christians in the world, and the appeals for profound renewal which the jubilee celebrations offer the community of believers extends the Jubilee's influence beyond the confines of the Church and in some way also affects civil society and its institutions.

In offering us an invitation to fix our gaze on the mystery of the Incarnate Word in which "the mystery of man truly becomes clear" (*Gaudium et spes*, n. 22), the Jubilee calls for believers and non-believers to measure themselves against the plan of salvation presented in the books of the Bible, to gain valuable insights from them about the greatness of the human person, whose supreme exaltation is found in Christ. May this vision prompt administrators to reconsider the quality of their service to the citizens, to understand the essential reasons for it and increasingly to purify their intentions and improve their performance.

3. Biblical tradition, received and developed by the Church's social teaching, presents the Jubilee as a time for reestablishing God's justice among human beings. This is an aspect of the Jubilee to which the public administrator cannot be insensitive. It is his task, in fact, to see that the citizens' expectations of justice and solidarity are fulfilled, by constantly asking himself whether every effort has been made to offer everyone the same opportunities, especially regarding access to employment, which the President explicitly mentioned.

Through reflection on the profound meaning of the Jubilee, public administrators are encouraged to work constructively with the social and business sectors in seeking a peace that arises from refusing privileges and from respecting the rights of all, especially the weak and marginalized. They are also spurred to promote dialogue between citizens of different cultures and religions living in the area, in order to combat any kind of racism or intolerance, and to reach out in every way to those who have been prevented until now from fulfilling their authentic aspirations.

4. Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I wanted to reflect on a few requirements which the Jubilee presents to every administrator's responsible attention.

I hope that the extraordinary event we are preparing to celebrate will find the institution you represent ready to accept them and fulfil them. I hope that the Lazio Region will draw from its history, from the religious, cultural and moral treasures of its peoples and from its administrators' desire to serve, the necessary energy and courage to make the Jubilee a time of justice and peace for everyone.

I once again wish each of you a peaceful and blessed New Year, and I am pleased to offer you the recent Letter I addressed to the world of work in the context of Rome's City Mission. As I assure you of a remembrance in my prayer for your demanding task, I warmly invoke God's blessing upon you, your families and the beloved people of Lazio.