



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATOR OF ROME

Friday, 18 January 1999

Mr President,

Distinguished Members of the Provincial Board and Council of Rome,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Welcome! I am pleased to receive you, as is our tradition at the beginning of the New Year, but especially as you begin your service to the Provincial Community of Rome. I cordially greet each of you. In particular, I greet the President of the Provincial Council, the Hon. Alberto Pascucci, and the President of the Provincial Board, the Hon. Silvano Moffa, whom I thank for his words on behalf of his colleagues.

I listened with interest to your reflections on the different themes and I was pleased to note your efforts to give priority to respect for the human person, attention to the role of the family in society, support for the social forces which seek to respond to the many challenges of the present moment. I cannot but encourage these good intentions, asking God constantly to help you and your work.

2. Chosen by the will of the people to exercise a demanding and responsible service to the civil community, you are called to work in your specific competences so that all who reside in the Province of Rome or in some way come into contact with it can look with hope to the present and the future. Yours is a very important mission, to which the Church makes her disinterested contribution.

The Christian community living in a territory does not feel foreign to it or to its problems and development. Although it is true that the various forms of evangelization and political and administrative activity do not coincide at the level of goals or means, it is still obvious that they can

and must agree on that mission common to both: service to the human person. Man, as I had occasion to state in my first Encyclical, is "the way for the Church" (*Redemptor hominis*, n. 4). Man must always be the "way" for political involvement and administrative structures: on this way it is possible and necessary to take a path of sharing which involves the energies of both sides.

3. Mr President, in your address a few moments ago you mentioned the policies and goals which are intended to guide the work of the Provincial Board and Council. I hope you will never lack this spiritual motivation which consists in an authentic search for truth, honesty and respect for the human person, concern for the common good and love for your brothers and sisters.

In this regard, may I indicate a few points for consideration which can be useful to your administrative and political work. First of all, it is important to identify *a hierarchy of problems and interventions*. How can one approach the management of social life without having a scale of priorities? Mr President, you emphasized the need for coordinated and effective interventions especially to benefit those living in difficult situations.

Everyone is immediately struck by the tragedy of *old and new forms of poverty*. Contemporary society, despite its unquestionable progress, still seems marked by a significant number of women and men who are struggling to live in dignity. It is concern for these less fortunate brethren that distinguishes and characterizes a public structure as a means of service to the community.

Otherwise the so-called "lowliest" risk being forgotten, becoming an ever greater appendage to an affluent society instead of being the focus of its decisions and overall orientation. A network of programmes which aim at the rehabilitation, advancement and integration of individuals and groups, thanks to the resource of *volunteers*, is indispensable.

4. In the President's words I noted a significant concern for the world of youth. It is true, young people must be one of the priorities of political activity. The younger generation, sometimes even unconsciously, is calling for *culture, ideals and authentic spirituality* as an antidote to that *lack of values* by which they feel threatened. The family, the school, the Diocese and the parish are called, while respecting their specific areas of competence, to pool their resources in order to offer the world of youth a society and a future of hope.

The President began by appropriately stressing that this is the year for the opening of the Holy Door through which we will enter the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000. How could I not mention this event of world importance? All the members of the Church and of civil society are invited to support it. The Jubilee, in addition to being a spiritual event, is an opportunity for a profound renewal of society, an occasion to rethink one's personal and collective decisions, a favourable time for a significant turning-point in the lives of individuals and communities.

I sincerely hope that the Jubilee will mark an extraordinary spiritual experience for everyone. I

accompany this wish with the assurance of a constant remembrance to the Lord for you and for the mission you are called to fulfil.

With these sentiments, I ask for God's blessing upon you, your families, your co-workers and the entire population of the Province.