



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II TO "SPRING MARATHON" RUNNERS

Saturday 27 May 2000

A cordial greeting to all of you, dear sponsors, organizers and participants in the "*Spring Marathon*", which is being run in the context of Catholic Schools Day. Your significant demonstration is being held for the 20th time. And this year it is an extraordinary occasion, the Spring Marathon of the Jubilee. This happy coincidence has prompted the organizing committee to involve not only Lazio's Catholic schools but also its State schools, to offer everyone a time of celebration which highlights the values of joy and brotherhood.

As you run through the streets of Rome, you will carry a message of hope: you will show that it is possible to create a future of peace and justice, and to remove every form of exploitation and oppression. Schools, at every level, must be a training ground for facing the challenges arising in our time. The years to be spent in the classroom are a precious cultural opportunity for you, dear students, and you should make the most of it. For you, dear teachers, they are an opportunity to impart not only ideas and scientific data, but to communicate an authentic experience of life. For you, dear families, they are important years to spend with your children, so that by dialogue and constant cooperation between you and the school, they will learn how to build their future on the fundamental human and Christian values of life.

In wishing you all a happy day of celebration and friendship, I officially open your Marathon and, as I implore Mary to grant her motherly protection to you and to all Catholic schools, I cordially bless you.

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