



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II TO SLOVENIAN JUBILEE PILGRIMS

Thursday, 26 October 2000

Dear Slovenian Pilgrims!

1. I welcome you with great joy to St Peter's Basilica on the occasion of your Holy Year pilgrimage to Rome. I first greet your Metropolitan Archbishop, Franc Rodé, whom I thank for the words he spoke on your behalf. I also extend my greeting to the other Bishops, priests and religious who are with you. And I greet all of you, who want to express your fidelity to the Successor of Peter with this pilgrimage.

In today's meeting at the tomb of the Prince of the Apostles, I see your response to my two unforgettable apostolic visits to Slovenia, during which I was able to get to know your Church and your people better. I still have a vivid memory of the solemn celebration in which I had the joy of enrolling among the blessed Bishop Anton Martin Slomsek, one of the many fruits of holiness of the Church in Slovenia.

2. Your presence in the Eternal City is the climax of the Jubilee celebrations in your cathedrals and the other churches of your country. During these days you are visiting the great Roman basilicas to gain the Jubilee indulgence; today you are meeting the Bishop of Rome and Successor of Peter.

I address you as the universal Pastor and Father, who accompanies you with love and prayer, urging you to be faithful to the holy Gospel and to the holy Catholic Church.

I would like to remind you of what I wrote in the Apostolic Letter *Tertio millennio adveniente*, when announcing the Holy Year of 2000: "The primary objective of the Jubilee is ... to inspire in all the faithful a true longing for holiness, a deep desire for conversion and personal renewal in a context

of ever more intense prayer and of solidarity with one's neighbour, especially the most needy" (n. 42). Your witness in the world will thus be strengthened.

3. I also exhort you to have greater courage and a healthy awareness of your dignity, which must also be shown in your civic involvement. Half a century of totalitarian government has left a feeling of inferiority and fear in many Christians. The time has come to overcome this attitude of timidity!

With commitment and on an equal footing, work with all people of good will in the fields of politics, the economy, culture, education and the mass media. You will thus help to establish a society of greater justice and solidarity, which takes its inspiration from the values of the kingdom of God, "a kingdom of truth and life, a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love and peace" (*Preface for the Feast of Christ the King*).

Finally, I urge you to carry out with all the enthusiasm of your hearts and souls the conclusions of the Synod of the Church in Slovenia, which is being held with the motto: "Choose life" (*Dt 30: 19*). The Synod is a great grace and an historic occasion given to you by the Lord to reflect calmly on your past and on the current situation of the Church, and to plan courageously for the future.

4. Above all, defend life! Here lies the crucial problem for the survival of the Slovenian people. The Synod should fill souls with a new trust and a new hope in life. This can only happen through a strong bond with the living God, who defends us from the forces of death, through personal contact with Jesus Christ, who "came that [we] may have life, and have it abundantly" (*Jn 10: 10*), and through our fidelity to his Gospel.

As I wrote in the Encyclical *Evangelium vitae*, "cultivate with humility and gratitude [the knowledge] that we are the people of life and for life" (n. 78), both within the family and in public.

5. In the joy of today's meeting, in this year of grace and mercy, I entrust you all to the protection of the Mother of God. From the national shrine of Brezje, may she support you with her maternal intercession and lead you to Jesus, the blessed fruit of her womb. To him be honour and glory for ever.

To those of you present here and to your families, I sincerely impart my Apostolic Blessing.
God bless dear Slovenia!

