



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II TO GROUPS OF PILGRIMS FROM SPAIN AND ITALY AND VARIOUS ASSOCIATIONS

Saturday, 16 December 2000

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

1. Today too, you have come in large numbers to this Jubilee event. Thank you for this pleasant visit which is part of your pilgrimage to the tombs of the Apostles. In the Year of the Great Jubilee, you intend to renew your profession of faith in Christ, our Saviour. I greet you with affection and very gladly welcome you to this large square, the daily destination of so many pilgrims from every part of the world.

2. I welcome you with great joy, Jubilee pilgrims from the *Archdiocese of Toledo and from other Spanish Dioceses*, who have come to Rome to take part in the solemn *Eucharistic celebration in the Hispanic-Mozarabic rite in St Peter's Basilica*. I affectionately greet Archbishop Francisco Alvarez Martínez of Toledo, Superior responsible for the Mozarabic rite, and thank him for his cordial words expressing your sentiments.

The celebration according to your ancient and venerable Hispanic-Mozarabic rite, which you have just concluded, is one in the series of Jubilee celebrations which have been celebrated in Rome during this Holy Year, in the various liturgical rites and traditions of the Church of both East and West. They have emphasized the unity of the Catholic faith in the legitimate diversity of its many historical and geographical expressions.

Dear brothers and sisters, it is not the first time that we have heard ringing out here the beautiful Mozarabic melodies and poetic liturgical texts of the ancient Hispanic Rite, jealously preserved by the Mozarabic community of Toledo. After a first celebration during the sessions of the Second Vatican Council, I myself had the great joy of presiding at the celebration of the Eucharist in the Hispanic-Mozarabic Rite on the day of Our Lord's Ascension in 1992. On that occasion, I said that the Hispanic-Mozarabic liturgy is an ecclesial and also cultural reality which cannot be consigned to oblivion if one wants to acquire a deep understanding of the roots of Christian spirituality in the Spanish people. Today I would like to add that as we face the great challenges of the present time it is necessary to draw from its abundant

spiritual and cultural treasures effective help in order to strengthen your people's Christian faith and, at the same time, a reliable orientation to direct the work of evangelization in the third millennium, in harmony with your ancestors' spirituality and the characteristics of the Spanish people.

Dear children of Toledo and of Spain, do not be afraid of today's great challenges! Advance confidently on the road of the new evangelization, charitable service to the poor and Christian witness in every social situation. Walk joyfully and take with you your rich and noble Christian tradition. Many saints have made your towns and cities a land of holiness. Follow their example, walk the path of holiness. Be apostles of our time, ever trusting in God's help.

May the Virgin Mary, Star of Advent, guide and support you. How fervently your Hispanic-Mozarabic liturgy praises her perpetual virginity!: "From her modest virginal womb came forth Jesus like a ray of the purest light.... O ineffable act of God! The Only-begotten Son of God emerges from his mother's depths without opening the natural way of birth. In being conceived and born, he seals the Virgin's womb and leaves it intact". To her I commend your families, your children and young people, and your sick and elderly, and, as I invoke upon you the protection of the holy Archbishop Ildefonsus of Toledo, I cordially bless you.

3. I now turn to you, dear brothers and sisters, involved in your various capacities in the *fashion sector*, who have gathered here to celebrate your Jubilee. In your work which demands of you imagination and taste, try to transmit the love of beauty to others. To do this fully, always be motivated by those sound moral principles that form the heritage of any authentically human culture.

May your work, also inspired by the beauty and newness of the Christian message, raise the spirit towards the One who transforms life's efforts into jubilation. I hope that each of you, a pilgrim to the tomb of the Apostle Peter, can make this experience of faith and conversion your own, to celebrate joyfully the 2,000th anniversary of Christ's birth.

4. I then greet all those who are members of the *National Federation of Fisheries* and who have come here with the General Director. In his parables Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven to "a net which was thrown into the sea" (*Mt* 13: 47) and the Apostles to "fishers of men" (*Mk* 1: 17).

The sea is a lovely image of this world in which our lives are lived. Humanity rides the billows of time to the shores of eternity. It is waiting to be saved by Christ. During the crossing, each human being seeks comfort and safety in Christ, whom "even wind and sea obey" (*Mk* 4: 41).

I hope that all of you will live this relationship with natural resources fully respecting the marine environment, so that work and a living will also be safeguarded for future generations in peaceful coexistence, on the sea as on land, in nature and among human beings.

5. A special thought goes to you, dear sponsors, organizers and artists who are taking part in the sympathetic and characteristic "*Derby of the Heart*" at the Olympic Stadium. This year, as always in collaboration with *Caritas*, its special goal is to meet the needs of children in difficulty, suffering or in danger. With Christmas now close, may your praiseworthy initiative which is so popular bring serenity to all who are taking part in it, actively or by television. May it be

a simple but effective contribution to destroying every barrier of social discrimination and nurturing the culture of acceptance and solidarity.

6. I now extend a warm greeting to the faithful from the Parishes of *St Mary of Grace* in Marcellina di Roma; *St Rocco* in Montorio al Vomano; *St Marcellinus* in Caserta; *St Gavinus Martyr*, in Camposanto; as well as to the faithful who have come from *Arce*, *Oppido Lucano*, *Balze de Verghereto*, and the representatives of the *Archconfraternity of Mercy of Florence*.

Dear friends, may today's Jubilee experience be for you an opportunity for renewed obedience to Christ, and encourage you to live Christmas, now at hand, with more intense prayer and generosity.

My welcome is also extended to the members of the Acrobatic Patrol of the "Frecce Tricolori", accompanied by Archbishop Angelo Comastri, Prelate of Loreto, and by General Andrea Fornasiero, Chief of Staff of the Italian Air Force. In extending a cordial greeting to them and their relatives, I hope that the activity of flying and their well-known air shows will be a forceful appeal to everyone to raise their eyes from earthly things to the luminous realities of heaven.

7. Dear *young scouts "unitaires de France"*, I greet you cordially, with all the French-speaking people. May your pilgrimage help you turn to Christ, to receive his grace and a new impetus for your mission in ever greater communion with the whole Church. With my Apostolic Blessing.

8. Lastly, I extend my affectionate greeting to the other groups of pilgrims and faithful who have gathered at our meeting, which is taking place at the very beginning of the Christmas Novena.

May Mary most holy, who 2,000 years ago accepted the Word of God made man in her virginal womb, help us prepare our hearts for the Lord who also comes in our time bringing peace and salvation. This is my wish for each of you present here, which I gladly accompany with a special Apostolic Blessing.

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