



# The Holy See

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**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II  
TO CHILDREN FROM VARIOUS COUNTRIES  
AT THE CLOSING CELEBRATION OF THE JUBILEE**

*Friday, 5 January 2001*

*Dear Children and Young People,*

1. I welcome you with great joy! Thank you for this beautiful celebration which you have organized right at the end of the Jubilee. I greet you all with great affection: those of you here in the Paul VI Hall, and those who have joined us by television. For this reason, I thank Italian Radio and Television (RAI), which has been responsible throughout the Jubilee Year for many broadcasts and radio and television link-ups.

The Holy Year opened with children; and it is right that it should also close with them. This is a positive sign of hope, a concrete wish for life. Above all, it is a homage to children, whom Jesus favoured and by whom he loved to be surrounded. To the people and to his disciples, he pointed to the little ones as models for entering the kingdom of heaven.

Dear friends! Your celebration is entitled "*Following the Comet*" and calls to mind the solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, which we will celebrate tomorrow. The comet reminds us of *the Wise Men*, the mysterious figures mentioned in the Gospel who were wise, cultured and expert in astronomy. But if we take a close look at them, they had childlike hearts fascinated by mystery; they were ready to accept the star's invitation and to leave everything in order to go and adore the King of the Jews, born in Bethlehem.

2. Dear friends, you who are children and young people today will tomorrow form the *first generation of adult Christians* in the third millennium. What a great responsibility you have! You will be the leading players at the *next Jubilee* in 2025. You will then be grown-ups: you may have started a family of your own, or have embraced the priestly life or been consecrated to a special

mission in the Church at the service of God and neighbour.

And I, who have had the great satisfaction of leading the Church into the third millennium, look at you with my heart full of hope. In your eyes, in your tender faces, I can already glimpse the milestone of the next Jubilee. I look into the distance and pray for you. Dear young people, keep aloft and shining brightly the lamp of faith which this evening I symbolically entrust to you and to your contemporaries in every corner of the world. With this light, illumine the paths of life; set the world ablaze with love!

May Our Lady accompany you, and I affectionately bless you all.