



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL
CATHOLIC UNION OF THE PRESS***

Friday, 6 December 2002

Dear Friends in Christ,

I am pleased to have this opportunity to meet the *Members of the International Catholic Union of the Press* as you celebrate your Organization's seventy-fifth anniversary. My warm greetings and prayerful best wishes go to all of you on this happy occasion, and I thank Archbishop John Foley, President of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, for the kind words addressed to me on your behalf.

From the Union's beginnings until the present, much growth and development has taken place. This can be seen not least in the fact that your first World Congress in 1930 brought together 230 Catholic journalists from 33 different countries, while your most recent one, which took place last year, saw 1080 Catholic journalists gathered from 106 countries throughout the world. This increase in numbers has certainly been accompanied by an ever keener awareness of the importance of your Catholic identity in the sphere of journalism, especially in the context of our rapidly changing world.

We may ask: what does it mean to be a professional journalist who is Catholic? Quite simply, it means being a person of integrity, an individual whose personal and professional life reflects the teachings of Jesus and the Gospel. It means striving for the highest ideals of professional excellence, being a man or woman of prayer who seeks always to give the best that they have to offer. It means having the courage to seek and report the truth, even when the truth is inconvenient or is not considered "politically correct". It means being sensitive to the moral, religious and spiritual aspects of human life, aspects which are often misunderstood or deliberately ignored. It means reporting not only the misdeeds and tragedies that take place, but also the

positive and uplifting actions performed on behalf of those in need: the poor, the sick, the handicapped, the weak, those who are otherwise forgotten by society. It means offering examples of hope and heroism to a world that is in desperate need of both.

Dear friends, these are some of the things that must mark your professional lives as Catholic journalists. And this is the spirit that the International Catholic Union of the Press must always strive to embody in its membership and activities. With heartfelt congratulations on the completion of seventy-five years of distinguished service to these ideals, I pray that your Organization will continue to be a source of fellowship and support for Catholics working in the world of journalism. May it help you to strengthen your commitment to Christ in and through your profession. With affection in the Lord, I cordially impart to you and your families my Apostolic Blessing.