



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
FOR THE BLESSING OF A MARBLE BUST
OF THE SERVANT OF GOD POPE PAUL VI**

Tuesday, 24 June 2003

*Your Eminences,
Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate and the Priesthood,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

1. Today the memory of the Servant of God Paul VI reunites us on the feast day of his heavenly protector, St John the Baptist. Forty years have passed since his election to the Chair of Peter, which occurred on 21 June 1963, and 25 years since his death at Castel Gandolfo on the Solemnity of the Transfiguration of the Lord, 6 August 1978.

His marble bust is unveiled and blessed today, placed in the atrium of this Aula named after him and that he desired to be a seat for the Pope's teaching. I greet the Cardinals, Bishops, Prelates, Priests, men and women Religious and the lay people who have come together in order to praise the memory of my most venerable Predecessor.

I salute and thank in particular the sculptor, Floriano Bodini, who has already dedicated other works to this most worthy Servant of the Church. With him, I salute and thank those who have devised and actualized this project, beginning with the dear Archbishop Pasquale Macchi, Pope Paul VI's devoted and industrious Secretary. My greeting is extended as well to Pope Montini's relatives, including his nephews with their respective families, as well as those responsible for the prestigious "Paul VI Institute" of Brescia, that cultivates with love the memory of this illustrious Son of the Brescian region.

2. On 29 June 1978, in the last public celebration on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of his election as Supreme Pontiff, he delivered a discourse that had the solemn and moving tone of a

final testament. I would like to reread a key passage: *"We cast a general look",* he said, *"at the history of the period in which the Lord has entrusted his Church to us.... And although we consider ourself the least and unworthy Successor of Peter, at this furthestmost threshold we feel ourself strengthened and upheld by the knowledge that we have untiringly repeated, before the Church and the world: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!". We too, like Paul, feel that we can say: "I have fought the good fight, I have have run the race to the finish, I have kept the faith..."'* (*Homily on Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul in St. Peter's Basilica; ORE 6 July 1978, p. 1*).

Let us pray to the Lord so that he gives his faithful servant the deserved reward. At the same time, we also pray for ourselves, that like him, we are able to work untiringly for the Reign of God. Help us, Mary, who at the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council, Paul VI proclaimed "Mother of the Church".

With such sentiments, I bless all of you. Thank you to all present.