



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE MEMBERS
OF THE 31ST SQUADRON OF THE ITALIAN AIR FORCE**

Tuesday, 13 January 2004

Dear Members of the 31st Squadron of the Italian Air Force,

I am pleased to meet you at the beginning of the new year and I warmly offer my very best wishes to each one of you. I greet you with affection and take this timely opportunity to thank you for the dedication and commitment with which you have made it easier for years for the Successor of Peter to carry out his pastoral ministry.

I greet in particular the Chief of Staff of the Air Force who has wished to honour us with his presence. I then thank your Commander for the words through which he has communicated your common sentiments.

In the past few days, the liturgy has invited us to contemplate Jesus made man who came to dwell among us. He is the Light that brightens our life and gives it meaning; he is the Redeemer who brings peace to the world. Let us welcome him with confidence and joy! He is presented to us by Mary Most Holy, who watches over us as a tender Mother. I ask you to turn to her at every moment and to entrust to her the year 2004 that has just begun.

With these sentiments, I invoke divine assistance on you and on your families, as I cordially impart a special Apostolic Blessing to you all.
