



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE MEMBERS
OF THE INTERNATIONAL SCHÖNSTATT MOVEMENT**

Thursday, 9 September 2004

*Dear Brothers and Sisters
of the International Schönstatt Movement,*

1. I joyfully welcome you to Castel Gandolfo. In these days, you have taken part in the inauguration of the Shrine of *Matri Ecclesiae* in the Eternal City. The creation of an International Schönstatt Centre in Rome highlights and strengthens your movement's ties with the Successor of Peter and with Mother Church.

I thank the President of the General Presidium for his cordial words. They show how the different branches of your movement are fired by the Apostolate in the contemporary world and by the ideal of Christian holiness.

2. In your movement your responsibility for society and for ensuring that the Christian spirit imbues social relations is growing. I have always sought to reawaken in our Church this responsibility for the world. I would therefore like to strengthen you in this task that takes many varied forms. One of them is active pro-life commitment in the midst of the dangers and threats of an ever more widespread culture of death, as the gruesome practice of abortion shows. All the faithful are therefore urged to provide those "signs of light" that the world always needs.

Schönstatt's commitment is addressed especially to the family as the primary nucleus of the Church, of culture and of society. In accordance with your Founder's recommendations, you give a privileged place to the Crucifix and to the image of Mary in your homes so that they will become "domestic sanctuaries of the Church" (cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*, n. 55), where Mary is active as a Mother and Teacher. Thus, as "the pilgrim Mother of God", Mary reaches out to

human beings so that they may experience her motherly love.

Our Church needs a revitalization of faith and apostolic activity. This commitment involves all the spiritual movements and Ecclesial Communities that the Spirit of God has brought forth on the threshold of the third millennium. They are Providence's reaction to the numerous challenges of our time.

3. Your new Shrine in Rome is dedicated to Mary, Mother of the Church. May the *Handmaid of the Lord* accompany and guide you in your service to the Church, so that through it, the features of the *Mater Ecclesiae* as the Body of Christ will become ever more clearly visible.

I therefore impart my heartfelt Apostolic Blessing to you and to all those throughout the world who belong to your large family.