



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS
POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO THE CIVIL AUTHORITIES OF THE
CASTEL GANDOLFO**

Friday, 26 September 1997

*Mr Mayor,
Members of the Town Board and Council,*

As I prepare to leave Castel Gandolfo to return to the Vatican, I am pleased to have this meeting with you, which has now become a tradition. It enables me to express my heartfelt gratitude to you for everything your administration does for me and for my assistants.

I thank you, Mr Mayor, for your kind words to me just now, which expressed the sentiments of the entire municipal administration and all the inhabitants of Castel Gandolfo. I cordially greet all the members of the Town Council.

Through you, I would also like to convey to your fellow citizens my deep appreciation of their well-known courtesy and the caring attention with which they surround me and follow my activity in service to the universal Church.

The Lord has allowed me to spend quiet days in this pleasant and tranquil spot: days which have enabled me to regain my strength, to continue my pastoral ministry with greater vigour. I would also like on this occasion to add a word of gratitude for your concern in meeting the many needs of those who came to visit me in Castel Gandolfo during the summer months. I give thanks to God, and I am grateful to you all that everything was always handled smoothly and calmly.

In taking my leave of you, I am pleased to entrust to your thoughts my imminent pilgrimage to Bologna for the close of the National Eucharistic Congress, as well as my forthcoming journey to

Rio de Janeiro for the World Meeting with Families.

These are moments of great importance in the Church's life, events that have an undoubted effect on public opinion. I deeply hope that that they will mark stages in a renewed spiritual enthusiasm not only for believers but for all humanity. As we advance towards the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, it is more important than ever that the Gospel increasingly become a shining beacon of hope and love for contemporary man and particularly for families.

I sincerely hope that love and harmony will increase in all your families, and that an atmosphere of understanding and solidarity will prevail in them so that each one's efforts will contribute to building up the common good. I accompany this cordial greeting with the assurance of a remembrance to the Lord, that he will help you with his grace and fill you with abundant consolation.

With these sentiments, I impart my Blessing to you and to the whole population of Castel Gandolfo.

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