



The Holy See

JOHN PAUL II

ANGELUS

Sunday, 23 January 2005

1. The "*Week of Prayer for Christian Unity*" is drawing to a close in these days. As usual, it will be ending with the celebration of *Vespers on 25 January in the Basilica of St Paul's-outside-the-Walls*. I will join in spirit in this liturgy, in which representatives of the other Churches and Christian Confessions will be taking part and whose principal celebrant will be Cardinal Walter Kasper, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

2. I ask Christian communities to live this annual spiritual event intensely; in a certain sense it gives us a foretaste of the joy of full communion, at least in our desire and in unanimous prayer for it. In fact, the knowledge that unity is in the first place a gift of God *to be tirelessly implored* in humility and truth, is always becoming ever clearer.

3. May Mary Most Holy, Mother of the Church, help us to overcome every obstacle and to obtain this gift as soon as possible. I fervently urge all believers, especially young people, to extend their ecumenical commitment throughout the year and to become everywhere instruments and witnesses of the full communion that Christ prayed for in the Upper Room.

After the Angelus:

Today in Rome we are celebrating *World Day for Catholic Schools* on the theme: "Church, family and school: educating together". In order to renew this commitment administrators, teachers, parents and pupils of Catholic schools in Rome have gathered in St Peter's Square, together with

those responsible for pastoral work in the Diocese. I offer them my affectionate and grateful greeting, as I express the hope that the precious service they offer Catholic schools will be ever more appreciated and supported by both the ecclesial and civil communities.

I greet the Spanish-speaking pilgrims, especially those from the parishes of La Epifanía, San Francisco Javier y Santa Marta de Valencia, as well as the members of the Dioceses of Avila and Extremadura. Pray for the full communion of Christians! The world is waiting for your Gospel witness of unity! Thank you!

I wish you all a good Sunday.

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