



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PILGRIMAGE OF THE SICK AND HANDICAPPED
FROM GREAT BRITAIN**

Thursday, 5 April 1984

I am very pleased to greet those taking part in the pilgrimage of the sick and handicapped led by Group Captain Cheshire and Lady Ryder.

My dear friends, I know that your visit to Rome is a great moment for all of you. Here, close to the tomb of the Apostle Peter, you are not just casual visitors admiring the artistic and historical monuments of this city. You are truly pilgrims, eager to renew your faith and to show other people the spiritual resources that help you to accept each day the cross of suffering to which our Lord has called you.

I am sure that you have often thought about the meaning and importance of your suffering. With you in mind I recently wrote an Apostolic Letter on the Christian meaning of Human Suffering. I wanted to affirm before the world that "*in suffering there is concealed a particular power that draws a person interiorly close to Christ, a special grace*" (Ioannis Pauli PP. II, *Salvifici Doloris*, 26) .

It is this closeness to the suffering Christ that places you in the very heart of the Church as she makes her pilgrim way towards the Kingdom of God. And because you are in the heart of the Church you are in my heart too. I ask you to pray for the Church, and to intercede for the whole of the human family in these times of great need.

I assure you that you are in my daily prayers, and I ask the Virgin Mother of our Redeemer to be with you always.

With deep affection I give you my Apostolic Blessing. I bless too the organizers and benefactors of your pilgrimage, your families and friends, and those looking after you in the love of Jesus Christ our Lord.

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