



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE REPRESENTATIVES FROM
THE LUTHERAN DIOCESE OF OULU IN FINLAND**

Thursday, 27 April 1989

Dear Bishop Rimpiläinen,

Dear Friends from Finland,

It gives me great pleasure to meet you, representatives of the *Lutheran Diocese of Oulu*, during the course of your visit to Rome. In the Risen Lord I greet each of you and express my cordial good wishes towards all the members of the Diocese.

I trust that your stay in this City, where the Apostles Peter and Paul bore witness to Christ and suffered martyrdom for the sake of the Gospel, will encourage you in following our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I pray that the greatly improved relations which now exist between us will continue to produce fruits of Christian love and collaboration, not only at a theological level but also at the level of parishes and local communities. It is important for Lutherans and Catholics to make use of opportunities to profess the common faith and pray together for that unity which Christ wishes for his followers. We are united by no less a bond than Baptism into Christ. Baptism is the foundation of our unity and it is our task to develop its interior dynamism towards the fullness of life in Christ (cfr. *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 22).

Tomorrow I will begin a Pastoral Visit to Africa, but I am already preparing for my visit in June to the Nordic Countries, including Finland. I look forward very much to having this firsthand experience of your country, meeting its people, visiting the small but esteemed Catholic community, and praying with the other Christians for our shared needs. I would ask you to pray for the success of that journey. It will be not only the first visit of a Pope to Finland but also a recognition of the bonds which have united your country with the Holy See since the Middle Ages.

May Almighty God pour out his blessings upon you, Bishop Rimpiläinen, and upon all of you present here. May the joy and peace of Christ be with your families and friends in Finland.

Jumala varjelkoon Suomea (May God protect Finland).

© Copyright 1989 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

Copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana