



# The Holy See

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**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II  
TO THE REPRESENTATIVES  
OF THE UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES**

*Thursday, 26 October 1989*

*Your Eminence,  
Dear Brothers in Christ,*

I am happy to welcome you, distinguished *representatives of the United Bible Societies*, on the occasion of your visit to Rome. We meet in the awareness that the life in Christ which we share is clarified and sustained in every way by the word of God, which is the power of God for the salvation of all who believe (Cfr. *Rom.* 1, 16). It is therefore with joy and gratitude that I take note of the spirit of ecumenical collaboration which prevails in your work as you seek to make the Scriptures increasingly known and understood.

You concluded your Council Meeting in Budapest last year by committing yourselves in a spirit of service and prayer to spread the word of God all over the world. I am confident that the United Bible Societies and the World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate will foster the fraternal collaboration which already inspires your efforts. One path forward in this regard lies in observing the *Guidelines for Interconfessional Cooperation for Translating the Bible*. Next year, the General Assembly of the Biblical Federation in Bogota on the theme "The Bible in the New Evangelization" will offer another opportunity for your common service to God's word.

According to the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, "like the Christian religion itself, all the preaching of the Church must be nourished and ruled by Sacred Scripture" (*Dei Verbum*, 21). Holy Scripture nourishes faith, strengthens ecclesial unity and is an important element of our common spiritual patrimony with Abraham's stock, our Jewish brothers and sisters. But the word of God is also an essential part of the cultural heritage of all humanity. It plays a decisive role in man's search for the living God, for the meaning of life, for reconciliation, justice and peace in human affairs. Hence, the followers of Islam, those who adhere to the other great world religions, and even non-believers can also benefit from a knowledge of Sacred Scripture. To penetrate the

Scriptures is to enter into the very mystery of God and of man. Your endeavours therefore are of the greatest importance and service to the Church and to the whole human family.

In announcing the mystery of God's love, Christ "reconciles the world to himself" (*2Cor.* 5, 19). Christ crucified and risen from the dead, our *Shalom*, is the centre of the message of salvation which we proclaim. On the occasion of our meeting today, I gladly express the hope that the members of the United Bible Societies will continue to participate, according to their particular gifts, in the proclamation of the Gospel which calls for the conversion of all mankind to Jesus Christ in "the Church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all" (*Eph.* 1, 22-23).

May the divine blessings of grace and peace be upon each one of you.

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