



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER
TO THE PERFORMERS AND ORGANIZERS
OF THE "CHRISTMAS IN THE VATICAN" CONCERT**

Thursday, 16 December 1999

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen!

I am pleased to extend a cordial greeting to you all. This meeting gives me the opportunity to express my appreciation to you for having accepted the invitation to take part in the seventh "*Christmas in the Vatican*" Concert, which will be held the day after tomorrow in the Paul VI Auditorium.

My gratitude extends once again to all who have made this event possible: the artists, the musical groups, orchestra members, choral singers and the conductors who will direct them; to the presenters and organizers of the evening. I hope that this year too such an interesting concert will be a moment of joy and carefree relaxation for everyone.

The "*Christmas in the Vatican*" Concert, as everyone knows, is a cultural event that seeks to sensitize public opinion to the need for more places of worship and catechesis in the Diocese of Rome. Your contribution to the success of this event thus expresses your generous concern for a problem that the Bishop of Rome has at heart: parish communities must have pastoral structures of their own, especially in the suburbs where there are none. This project is part of the wider programme of the new evangelization to which the entire Church is committed and of which the Great Jubilee is an important event.

The goal of building 50 sacred buildings by the Year 2000, thanks be to God, has almost been reached. It will thus be necessary to continue this effort. The city of Rome, which is preparing to play a leading role in the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, will be able to count on the opening of places for worship, meeting and catechesis and structures for social, cultural and athletic activities, especially where new housing has been built in recent years. In the meantime, I thank you for your

great contribution! Through me, the entire Church of Rome would like to express its heartfelt thanks not only to you but to everyone who has shared our apostolic concern.

I hope that this evening will be a great success, and, as I take this opportunity to extend my cordial wishes for a happy Christmas to each of you and to your families, I give you all a special Apostolic Blessing.

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