



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II AFTER THE RECITATION OF THE ROSARY

Saturday, 6 March 1999

I cordially thank all of you who have taken part in the recitation of the Holy Rosary on this First Saturday of March, the month dedicated to St Joseph, husband of Mary and patron of the universal Church. I greet the groups of faithful who have come from Tivoli, Castelfranco di Sopra, Foggia and Naples; the Pro-Life Movement from Cervia, the Lions Club of Andria, the volunteers, assistants and young members of Rome's Casal del Marmo Institute and the children from St Dorothy's School in Montecchio Emilia, with their parents and teachers.

I extend a special greeting to the young university students present here and those who are linked with us through Vatican Radio. Dear university students, I greet you affectionately! We have meditated on the mystery of God the Father's love, of which Mary is the first witness, and we have prayed for the gift of reconciliation and mercy for university students throughout the world. This evening I have the joy of sharing with you the start of the pilgrimage of the Cross in your universities. May you see the Cross as the most eloquent sign of the Lord's mercy, which can give every academic community new enthusiasm for the One who is the foundation and certainty of every journey of intellectual research.

Your fellow students at universities in Buenos Aires, New York, Częstochowa and Santiago de Compostela are joined with us in prayer. This initiative already directs us to World Youth Day and the World Meeting of University Teachers in the Year 2000. Prepare yourselves, dear university students of Rome, to welcome your peers who will come from every part of the world. With Mary's help, may you be apostles in the university world.

I affectionately greet the university students from Buenos Aires! I thank Bishop Raúl Rossi and the academic authorities. Dear young people: your mission is to encourage your university communities regarding the Great Jubilee, which is meant as an occasion for great spiritual and cultural renewal. I am counting on your cooperation for the success of World Youth Day in the Year 2000. I hope that many of you will be able to experience this day in Rome.

I extend an affectionate greeting to the students of Columbia University in New York, gathered in Notre Dame Church with Bishop Anthony Mestice. You remind me of my recent joyful visit to the United States. I renew my trust in you, and I

encourage you in your efforts to be good Christians within your own culture. May the approach of the Great Jubilee prompt you to be ever more faithful to Christ, and ever more active in bearing witness to the Gospel in today's world.

With particular affection I greet the university students of Częstochowa and other academic centres who are joined in prayer, led by Archbishop Stanisław Nowak at the shrine of Jasna Góra. The sound of your prayer has brought back so many memories to me. I appreciate your active involvement in the university chaplaincy. This gives us hope that the growth of learning and culture in our country will always be rooted in its age-old Christian tradition. I ask that you entrust to the Queen of Jasna Góra the jubilee initiatives of university centres throughout the world, especially World Youth Day, which will be held in Rome next year. God bless you!

Lastly, I extend a greeting to the university students of Santiago de Compostela, gathered in the cathedral and led by Archbishop Julián Barrio Barrio. I am grateful that you have participated so enthusiastically in this meeting, offering your witness on the air during the Jubilee Year of Compostela. I assure you of my prayers so that it will be a grace-filled event for the many university students who will participate in the European youth meeting next August. I have great confidence in your commitment to encourage the university to be suitably prepared for the Great Jubilee.

At the end of our meeting, I am happy to impart my Apostolic Blessing to you all.