



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II TO THE POOR DURING LUNCH TOGETHER AT PAUL VI HALL

Thursday 15 June 2000

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

For me this is certainly one of the most moving and significant of the many Jubilee events. I wanted to meet you and share a meal with you in order to tell you that *you are in the Pope's heart*. I embrace each of you, dear friends, with great affection.

I cannot, of course, spend much time with you, but I assure you that I accompany you each day with prayer and affection. As I look at you one by one, I think of all those in Rome and in every part of the world who are experiencing moments of hardship and difficulty. I would like to draw near to them all to tell them: *do not feel alone, because God loves you*. The Pope loves you, dear friends, and with him the whole Church opens her arms to you in welcome and brotherhood.

Thank you all for accepting my invitation and for coming in large numbers to this festive meeting which is taking place a few days before the beginning of the International Eucharistic Congress in Rome. In its simplicity, our meal is *an important preparation* for this spiritual event, which is the heart of the Jubilee Year. Today, in fact, we find ourselves gathered round a material table: next week, together and in even greater numbers we will approach the spiritual table, the Eucharistic banquet, to celebrate the love of God who makes us brothers and sisters in solidarity with one another. Let us prepare ourselves well for this extraordinary event, to which we look forward with eager expectation.

Once again thank you for coming; I thank everyone who has organized and prepared this luncheon, as well as those who have brightened it with music and song, making it a peaceful and joyful moment. I cordially impart my Blessing to you all.

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