



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC
ASSOCIATION FOR RADIO AND TELEVISION
AND THE INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC ORGANIZATION
FOR CINEMA AND AUDIOVISUALS (OCIC-UNDA)**

Tuesday, 20 November 2001

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It gives me great pleasure to greet you, *the members of Unda*, the International Catholic Association for Radio and Television, *and OCIC*, the International Catholic Organization for Cinema and Audiovisuals, as you prepare in just a few days to merge your two organizations and form *SIGNIS*, the new international Catholic organization for all audiovisual media. It is my hope, and yours too I am sure, that *SIGNIS* will expand and make ever more effective the work which your two organizations have undertaken for the past seventy years, the work of evangelizing in and through the communications media, proclaiming the Lord's saving Gospel in the world of cinema, radio, television and, most recently, internet.

The formation of this Organization at the beginning of the new millennium seems particularly appropriate. Indeed, with the great advances in communications technology and the continuing process of globalization, the Church's mission of making Christ known and loved by all people finds itself with ever new opportunities, and ever new challenges as well. The past years have seen remarkable growth in Catholic radio broadcasts in various countries of Africa and Europe, and there has also been great development in Catholic television, due especially to satellite transmission and cable distribution. *SIGNIS* must continue to create new audiences for Catholic programming and work with other involved bodies to ensure that positive religious and spiritual content is not lacking in the various media productions.

People spend enormous amounts of time absorbed in media consumption, particularly children

and adolescents. An important part of your work, therefore, is to teach wise and responsible media use. This means setting high standards not for the general public alone but also for the leaders of the communications industry. It means bringing people to a keen awareness of the great influence that the media has in their lives. It means monitoring the quality of content and promoting constructive dialogue between media producers and consumers.

Dear Friends, these are some of the tasks that lie before you, tasks that demand courage and commitment, tasks that you willingly take up as part of your Christian vocation. The Lord Jesus himself is with you to support you and strengthen you: as he told the Apostles when giving them his final mandate to make disciples of all nations, "I am with you always, to the close of the age" (*Mt 28:20*). May the soon-to-be-founded SIGNIS organization be *an ever effective instrument* of the Lord's enduring presence in our world and of his abiding love for all men and women.

To all of you I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing.