



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL
OF THE ORDER OF FRIARS PREACHERS**

Friday, 15 February 2002

Dear Religious,

1. I greet with great joy, you who make up the General Council of the Order of Preachers. I greet cordially each one and through you greet your entire religious family. In particular I thank the Master General, Fr Carlos Azpiroz Costa, for expressing your common sentiments of loyalty and fidelity to the Apostolic See.

Meeting you today reminds me of the contacts I have had with your Order. I still have pleasant memories of my student years at the Pontifical University of St Thomas Aquinas in Rome. It was a very fruitful period for my theological formation due to the expert contribution of my superlative and unforgettable Dominican teachers. Here I would like to mention Fr Garrigou-Lagrange and Frs Paul Philippe and Mario Luigi Ciappi, who later became Cardinals, and other distinguished Dominican professors. What I had the chance to assimilate in the classrooms of the *Angelicum*, has always been helpful in my pastoral ministry.

2. The Dominican Order of which you are the ranking representatives, has a specific task in the immense undertaking of the new evangelization that the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 vigorously launched. This is a common ecclesial enterprise to which all the members of the People of God, and particularly religious families, are called to contribute.

As I wrote in the Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio ineunte*, "The men and women of our own day often perhaps unconsciously ask believers not only to 'speak' of Christ, but in a certain sense to 'show' him to them" (n. 16). Doesn't this request coincide with the project of life that St Dominic expressed so effectively: "*contemplata aliis tradere*" (to hand on to others what contemplation has

taught)? Only those who have had an experience of God can speak of him convincingly to others. At the school of St Dominic and of all the Dominican saints you are called to be teachers of truth and holiness.

3. Dear friends, may this be the basic thrust of your General Council in providing courageous instructions for the life and apostolate of the Dominican Friars throughout the world. I follow you whole-heartedly, wishing every good thing for your communities spread on every continent. I call down upon you the motherly help of Our Lady of the Rosary and the protection of the saints and blessed of your Order.

As I assure you of my remembrance in prayer, I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing to you, to your confreres and to all who belong to the Dominican spiritual family.