



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE FAITH AND LIGHT MOVEMENT

Thursday, 26 September 2002

Dear Friends,

I am particularly happy to welcome you, who represent the International Association, "Faith and Light", and I greet in a special way the founders Marie-Hélène Mathieu and Jean Vanier.

Founded in Lourdes, your movement received abundant grace from that special place where the sick and disabled take first place. In welcoming all these "little ones", scarred by mental handicaps, you have recognized them as special witnesses of the tenderness of God. We have much to learn from them and they have to take their own place in the Church. In fact, their membership in the ecclesial community opens the way to simple and fraternal relations and their filial and spontaneous prayer invite us to turn to our Father in Heaven.

I also think of their parents, who, thanks to you, feel supported in their suffering and see their distress changed into hope so that they welcome their disabled infants with humanity and faith. They discover the path of conversion that the Gospel opens to human beings: through the Cross, the expression of the Lord's "greatest love for his friends" each person receives the power to take part in the life of God, who is love.

I would like to thank you once again for your witness in our society that is called increasingly to discover the dignity of the disabled, to accept them and to integrate them in social life, even if much still remains to be done to ensure that the dignity of every human being is truly respected and that no one ever undermines the gift of life, especially when one is dealing with infants with a disability. They remind us of the meaning and value of every life.

Dear friends, as I entrust your meeting to Our Lady, I pray that your work may be fruitful, and may

renew you in your firm commitment to serving a beautiful and noble cause. I cordially impart to each of you and to all those whom you represent a special Apostolic Blessing.

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