



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO H.E. MR GUIDO DE MARCO,
PRESIDENT OF MALTA***

Thursday, 22 January 2004

Mr President,

I am pleased to welcome you and your family to the Vatican. Your visit brings back vivid memories of [my journey to Malta](#) three years ago, and the very warm welcome which I received. My Jubilee pilgrimage in the footsteps of Saint Paul was an occasion for me to appreciate once more your country's ancient Christian heritage, and to encourage your fellow citizens in their efforts to build a society worthy of its noble cultural tradition. Malta's strength has always been its families, which have not only enriched the social fabric but also contributed significantly to the Church's universal mission, not least through their abundant harvest of priestly and religious vocations. May families always find encouragement and support in their work of educating the young who are the future of Malta. Upon you and all the beloved Maltese people I cordially invoke God's abundant blessings of prosperity, joy and peace.

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