



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC PILGRIMAGE OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO BERN
ON THE OCCASION OF THE NATIONAL MEETING
OF THE YOUNG CATHOLICS OF SWITZERLAND

MEETING WITH THE ASSOCIATION OF FORMER SWISS GUARDS

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II

Square in front of Viktoriaheim Residence

Sunday, 6 June 2004

Dear Friends,

1. At the end of this Apostolic Pilgrimage in Switzerland, I am delighted to meet you, members of the Association of Former Swiss Guards, with your relatives. I offer each one of you my cordial greeting. In the more than 25 years of my Pontificate, I have had the opportunity to become acquainted with many of you at the Vatican and it is a pleasure to see you again now with your families. Thank you for your pleasing presence. I address a special "thank you" to Mr Jacques Babey, President of your Association, for his courteous words on your behalf.
2. The Successor of Peter has a special debt of gratitude to this Country's Catholic community. This is because it provides the Swiss Guards, who for 500 years have carried out the special task of keeping order and safeguarding security in the Vatican, at Castel Gandolfo and wherever the Pope's ministry takes him. In the Gospel it is said that a good tree is known by its fruit (cf. Mt 7: 17-18). Well, the young people from here who go to Rome for this special service to the Pontiff are young men who do honour to their families and parishes of Switzerland.
3. They also honour this praiseworthy Association that is concerned to keep the interest in this service to the Church ever alive here in their Homeland, so that the Pontifical Swiss Guard may benefit from a constant and valid exchange. I thank you warmly for all you have done and continue

to do, and encourage you to persevere in your commitment to witness to Christ and to be faithful to the Church in our changing world.

May the Virgin Mary always watch over you and your families. I wholeheartedly bless you all.