



# The Holy See

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**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II  
TO THE SISTERS OF THE MONASTIC FAMILY OF BETHLEHEM  
OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN AND ST BRUNO**

*Monday, 31 May 2004*

*Dear Sisters of the Monastic Family of Bethlehem  
of the Assumption of the Virgin and of St Bruno,*

I am delighted to welcome you on the occasion of your General Chapter. I greet in particular Sr Isabelle, your Prioress, as well as the members of the General Council. I also cordially welcome the members of the Council of the men's branch of your Monastic Family who are also present. In this season of Pentecost, I hope that the Spirit will strengthen you in your specific mission and enlighten you in the decisions you will have to take. As you seek to quench your thirst at the source of your founding charism, may the Breath of God enable you to enter into ever greater intimacy with Christ, the fount of the effectiveness of your witness and the dynamism of your fraternal charity!

Through humble and daring fidelity in the silence that marks your hidden life, you are sustained by the prayer of the Virgin Mary. Through your contemplative life, you raise the world to God and remind the people of today to make time in life for silence and prayer.

May St Bruno, tireless custodian of the Kingdom to come, obtain that you remain vigilant in prayer, keeping "watch, holy and persevering, as you wait for the return of the Master, to open to him as soon as he knocks (cf. *Lettre à Raoul*, n. 4)! In particular, I invite your monastic Family, whose title bears the name of Bethlehem, the birthplace of the Emmanuel, to intensify its prayers for the Near East, imploring the Lord to grant the grace of peace and reconciliation to all the inhabitants of this region, battered by violence.

With all my heart I willingly impart to you an affectionate Apostolic Blessing, which I extend to all

the Sisters of your Monastic Family, to the members of the male branch and to all those who are close to you.

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