



The Holy See

MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER

JOHN PAUL II

TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE RITE OF THE WAY OF THE CROSS

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am with you in spirit at the Colosseum, a place that stirs up within me so many memories and emotions, in order to take part in the evocative rite of the *Way of the Cross* on this Good Friday evening.

I join you in the invocation, so rich in meaning: "*Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi, quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum*". Yes, we adore and bless the mystery of the Cross of the Son of God, because it was from his death that new hope for humanity was born.

The adoration of the Cross directs us to a commitment that we cannot shirk: the mission that St Paul expressed in these words: "*[I]n my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the Church*" (Col 1: 24). I also offer my sufferings so that God's plan may be completed and his Word spread among the peoples. I, in turn, am close to all who are tried by suffering at this time. I pray for each one of them.

On this memorable day of Christ's crucifixion, I look at the Cross with you in adoration, repeating the words of the liturgy: "*O crux, ave spes unica!*". Hail, O Cross, our only hope, give us patience and courage and obtain peace for the world!

With these sentiments, I bless you and all those who are taking part in this *Way of the Cross* via radio or television.

From the Vatican, 25 March 2005

JOHN PAUL II
