



The Holy See

URBI ET ORBI MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE JOHN PAUL II CHRISTMAS 2003

1. Descendit de caelis Salvator mundi. Gaudeamus!

The Saviour of the world has come down from heaven. Let us rejoice!

This proclamation, filled with deep rejoicing,
echoed in the night of Bethlehem.

Today the Church renews it with unchanged joy:

the Saviour is born for us!

A wave of tenderness and hope fills our hearts,
together with an overpowering need for closeness and peace.

In the crib we contemplate the One
who stripped himself of divine glory
in order to become poor, *driven by love for mankind*.

Beside the crib the Christmas tree,
with its twinkling lights,
reminds us that with the birth of Jesus
the tree of life has blossomed anew in the desert of humanity.

The *crib* and the *tree*: precious symbols,
which hand down in time the true meaning of Christmas!

2. In the heavens there echoes the proclamation of the angels:

*"To you is born in the city of David
a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord"* (Lk 2:11).

What wonder!

By being born in Bethlehem, the Eternal Son of God
has entered into the history of each person
living on the face of the earth.

He is now present in the world
as the one Saviour of humanity
For this reason we pray to him:
Saviour of the world, save us!

3. Save us from the great evils which rend humanity
in these first years of the third millennium.
Save us from the wars and armed conflicts
which lay waste whole areas of the world,
from the scourge of terrorism
and from the many forms of violence
which assail the weak and the vulnerable.
Save us from discouragement
as we face the paths to peace,
difficult paths indeed, yet possible and therefore necessary;
paths which are always and everywhere urgent,
especially in the Land where You were born,
the Prince of Peace.

4. And you, Mary, *the Virgin of expectation and fulfilment*,
who hold the secret of Christmas,
make us able to recognize in the Child
whom you hold in your arms the heralded Saviour,
who brings hope and peace to all.
With you we worship him and trustingly say:
we need You, Redeemer of man,
You who know the hopes and fears of our hearts.
Come and stay with us, Lord!
May the joy of your Nativity reach
to the farthest ends of the universe!