



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY PRO-LIFE GROUP

13 December 1986

Dear Friends, I AM PLEASED to welcome to the Vatican this group of British Members of Parliament and their families. I thank you for coming to Rome and for the kind sentiments which prompted you to request this audience. 1. Your presence here today reminds me of my pastoral visit to your country several years ago. So many special moments of that visit remain vividly fresh in my mind and heart. I think, for example, of the prayer service for the family which took place in the City of York. On that occasion, I spoke of the positive aspects of family life in contemporary society and of the negative phenomena which families are experiencing. Some of you may recall that, in the context of that meeting, I directed some words to public authorities, words which I would like to repeat today since they seem particularly appropriate as I meet with you here in the Vatican. I said: "Treasure your families. Protect their rights. Support the family by your laws and administration. Allow the voice of the family to be heard in the making of your policies. The future of your society, the future of humanity, passes by the way of the family". I know that, as distinguished Members of the Parliamentary Pro-Life Group, you do indeed possess a deep concern for the well-being of the family, and for the good of all your fellow citizens. In a particular way, your efforts are directed towards the protection of human life from the moment of conception until natural death. Such concerns bear witness to your awareness of the primacy of moral values and to your convictions about the dignity of all human life. 2. Accordingly, I am confident that you would agree with what I stated in my Apostolic Exhortation on the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World, namely: "The great task that has to be faced today for the renewal of society is that of recapturing the ultimate meaning of life and its fundamental values". All of us can contribute to this great task. The family certainly has a central role to play, as does the Church by her faithfulness to Christ and the Gospel. You, as parliamentarians, have a special contribution to make, one which I know you are eager to fulfil. In this, I offer my personal support and encouragement. 3. In the context of contemporary society, and of British society specifically, your work requires that you associate with people of many different backgrounds and points of view. You must continually practice the art of dialogue as persons of integrity and truth. This means that you candidly and courageously put forth your own convictions while seeking to detect the portion of truth which others present for your consideration. You do not shut your eyes to what is unjust or wrong. In fact, the more closely you yourselves are attuned to true moral values the more sensitive you become to what is inconsistent with these, and thus detrimental to the good of the human family. This growing awareness should give you renewed courage to forge ahead, to discover the deeper roots of injustice and evil, to look for appropriate remedies and to persevere in efforts to put these into effect. Truth does

not permit us to despair of our opponents. Nor does it allow us to equate them with the errors which they seem to propose. Rather, it calls us continually to maintain a deep respect for all people, and urges us to appeal to reason, to conscience and to the heart, never losing hope of arriving at a new and deeper understanding and solution. We meet today during the Advent Season, a time when the Church prepares to celebrate the Feast of our Saviour's Birth. This is a season of hope, a season of faith and love. May it be for each of you and for all the members of your families a special time of grace. *God bless you all.* © Copyright 1986 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

Copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana