



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER
POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE REUNION
OF THE HARVARD LAW SCHOOL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**

13 June 1998

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am pleased to welcome the members of the Harvard Law School Alumni Association on the occasion of your Reunion, being held this year in Rome. It is fitting that your group, which includes distinguished jurists from throughout the world, is meeting in this City so closely associated with the development of Western law, both civil and canonical. It is my hope that your own work of framing, applying and teaching the law will be guided by the lofty ideals of justice and equity which inspired the great tradition of jurists who, in the course of over two thousand years, sought to make Roman law not only an instrument of public order, but also of education in civic virtue and therefore a teacher of civilization itself. The century now drawing to its close has been marked by unprecedented crimes against humanity, often carried out under the guise of legality. But we are also seeing a rebirth of hope in the power of law and legal institutions to protect human dignity, to foster peace and to promote justice between peoples. The fulfillment of this hope will require not only the establishment of more effective structures of law, but also, more importantly, the renewal of a juridical culture of respect for the objective requirements of the universal moral law as the basis and ultimate criterion of all positive legal enactments. What is needed, in effect, is a rediscovery of those essential and innate human and moral values which flow from the very nature and truth of the human person, and which express and safeguard the dignity of the person: values which no individual, no majority and no State can ever create, modify or destroy, but must only acknowledge, respect and promote (cf. *Evangelium Vitae*, 71). Dear Friends, may the words of the Psalmist be fulfilled in all of you: "Blessed are they who observe justice, who do righteousness at all times" (Ps 106:3). May your daily efforts in the service of the law contribute to the growth of a more peaceful and humane world. Upon you and your loved ones I cordially invoke the abundant blessings of Almighty God. © Copyright 1998 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana