



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PROMOTERS OF THE AGREEMENT
OF SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION
BETWEEN THE "LA SAPIENZA" UNIVERSITY OF ROME
AND THE POLISH ACADEMY
OF SCIENCES AND ARTS OF KRAKÓV**

Thursday, 5 April 2001

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen!

1. With deep joy, I address a cordial welcome to each one of you. I sincerely thank you for this visit, which you wished to make to me on the occasion of the signing of the Agreement of Scientific Cooperation between the "La Sapienza" University of Rome and the Polish Academy of Sciences and Arts of Kraków, which has fortunately resumed full activity, after the unfortunate interruption of 38 years, decreed by the communist regime.

I cordially greet Professor Giuseppe D'Ascenzo, the Rector Magnificent of the Roman University, and Professor Andrzej Bialas, President of the Academy of Kraków. I thank them both for the courteous words that they addressed to me on behalf of those present, underlining the importance of today's event and the joint commitment that motivates the two institutions. I hope that they can achieve significant objectives for the benefit of the cultural development of Poland and of Italy.

The Agreement just reached forms part of the new climate that has been created in Europe after the fall of the Berlin wall at the end of the 1980s. It testifies to the desire present in large sections of European culture to build a common European community, which is not only the fruit of economic interests, but which is above all a community of values, traditions and ideals. The people of our continent by such meetings and occasions as ours, can increasingly promote a future of mutual respect and peace.

2. As Bishop of Rome and Bishop of the Catholic Church, which has played and continues to play an important part in the construction of European civilization, and as a member of the Polish Academy of Sciences and Arts of Kraków, I wish to express my most sincere and satisfied appreciation for this initiative. By linking old and prestigious European institutions, it can significantly contribute to the construction of a Europe that breathes with both lungs, drawing from its historical patrimony and the cultural, moral, civil and religious riches of its peoples of the East and of the West.

May this agreement, the eloquent expression of a praiseworthy determination to want to cooperate together with an authentic European spirit, form the beginning of a profitable and fruitful exchange between your two esteemed academic centres. Moreover may it represent a point of reference for other similar noble and promising projects.

To this end, I invoke divine assistance on all those who promoted and achieved this Agreement, as also on those who form the families of the two great institutions and I sincerely impart to you all, as a sign of esteem and affection, a special Apostolic Blessing.