



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PILGRIMS
FROM THE ITALIAN DIOCESE OF ORIA**

Saturday, 26 January 2002

I hope with all my heart that a burst of missionary enthusiasm will come from this providential event [the imminent Pastoral Visit], especially for the parishes, in which ecclesial communion is most immediately and visibly seen. In them, in fact, is "the Church herself, living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters" (*Christifideles laici*, n. 26).

May every parish community be a privileged place for listening to and announcing the Word; a house of prayer, of meditation centred on the Eucharist; a true school of communion in which the passion for charity overcomes superficial or folkloric religiosity, and constitutes a suitable atmosphere in which to teach the faithful the high standard of ordinary Christian living that is holiness (cf. *Novo Millennio ineunte*, n. 31). With this stimulus, believers will not be content with a life lived under the banner of mediocrity or ethical minimalism; rather they will acquire a stronger awareness of their baptismal commitments.

When a greater effort is made to attain holiness, fatigue and disappointment are overcome letting the "'creativity' of charity" grow stronger and attention to those who are afflicted by the old and new forms of poverty matures. Committed Christians feel the need to face today's serious social and cultural problems with courage and competence, and are ready to accept the challenges of the environment we live in, making a personal contribution to ensure that the quality of civil coexistence improves.

4. In the commitment that must be a feature of your apostolic action, dear brothers and sisters, pay special attention to *the family*, the primary cell of society and bastion of humanity's future, reacting with firmness to some of the serious cultural pressures that offend and relativize the value of marriage.

It is in Christian families that budding vocations to the priesthood and the consecrated life are most likely to develop. May God bless the Diocese of Oria with an abundant flourishing of vocations, so that it will never be short of ministers and apostles of Christ who are totally dedicated to building the Kingdom.