



The Holy See

***LETTER OF POPE JOHN PAUL II
FOR THE 13TH WORLD DAY OF THE SICK
(YAOUNDÉ - CAMEROON, 9 - 11 FEBRUARY 2005)***

*To Cardinal Javier Lozano Barragán
President of the Pontifical Council for Health Pastoral Care*

1. Your Eminence, as my Special Envoy to the celebrations for the 13th World Day of the Sick, I entrust you with the task of addressing my most cordial greetings to all the participants and to all who, via the mass media, will be joining in spirit in this solemn moment of reflection and prayer at "Mary, Queen of the Apostles" Shrine in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

I express my sentiments of gratitude to the President of the Republic of Cameroon and to his Collaborators for the availability that the whole Country has shown in the preparatory phases and celebration of this event.

I greet the Bishops, priests and deacons responsible for the pastoral animation of the entire community. I greet the men and women religious who are always ready to come to the aid of those in trouble. I greet in particular all the personnel from the health-care world, for it is on their generous commitment that the care and nursing of the sick largely depends.

I have very special thoughts for you, dear sick brothers and sisters, who bear in your bodies the signs of suffering and frailty, and also for you, their families, who are closest to them in their daily life: I am present among you all with my wholehearted affection.

2. This year, the celebration of World Day of the Sick is taking place in Africa, a Continent scarred by many serious problems, but also rich in extraordinary human and spiritual resources and enlivened by an intense desire for peace and authentic progress. Africa is suffering because of the presence of so many sick who are silently calling for solidarity from the whole world.

Dear brothers and sisters of Africa, Jesus is "the Man who knows suffering". In this year dedicated to the Eucharist, I invite you, in your thoughts and hearts, to join in the sacrifice of the Mass, an inexhaustible source of hope in all life's trials.

May Mary, Queen of the Apostles and Help of the Sick, who on Calvary participated in the painful martyrdom of her Son, gather up the tears of those who are afflicted by suffering in Africa and in every corner of the earth.

I very gladly impart to you, Your Eminence, and to all those who will be taking part in the celebrations for World Day of the Sick, a special Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 1 February 2005

JOHN PAUL II

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