



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE ITALIAN CARABINIERI
WHO SERVE IN THE LAZIO REGION**

Monday, 26 February 2001

Dear Members of the Carabinieri!

1. Welcome and thank you for your visit, which brings to mind the Great Jubilee, when the Carabinieri were called to lend their much appreciated service, which particularly involved the Carabinieri of the Lazio Region who work in the city of Rome. Today's audience offers me the opportunity to express my gratitude and that of the Holy See. I first greet General Corrado Borruso, Commander of the Lazio Region Carabinieri, and thank him for the noble words that he addressed to me on behalf of all those present. I also cordially greet Colonel Baldassare Favara and each of you, who have gathered here to represent your many colleagues who cooperated, together with the other armed forces, in the smooth running of the various Jubilee events and in the safety of the many pilgrims and visitors who came to Rome throughout the Holy Year.

2. In receiving you, who are a skilled part of the Italian Armed Forces, my thoughts cannot fail to turn to Sunday, 19 November last, when, in St Peter's Square, we celebrated the Jubilee of the Armed Forces and the Police. That was an important witness of faith by military personnel from numerous countries and by their families. On that occasion I had the chance to urge everyone to be "custodians of the security and freedom of your fellow-countrymen" and to be "men and women of peace" (*Homily*, n. 4; *L'Osservatore Romano* English edition, 22 November 2000, p. 2).

Today I repeat these words to you, thinking of the mission you carry out in the Rome area. This city has a unique role in the Christian world, and it is important that everyone, from the residents to pilgrims, from migrants to tourists, can live here in a climate of respect for the human person and the values related to him. That is, a substantially human and Christian atmosphere.

For this to happen, it is necessary that military personnel, guardians of order and lawfulness, cultivate these most noble values in their souls. These values, which are rooted in human and Christian traditions, must be constantly nourished through individual and community effort. The faithful know that they are called to this task by virtue of the vocation to holiness given to everyone.

Holiness, in fact, means to live fully the Gospel virtues in the concrete situations of daily life. The history of the Italian Carabinieri shows that the heights of holiness can be reached in the faithful and generous fulfilment of the duties of one's state. I am thinking here of your colleague, Sergeant Salvo d'Acquisto, awarded a gold medal for military valour, whose cause of beatification is under way.

3. In order to progress on this path of human and Christian development, what is necessary is prayer, reconciliation with God through sacramental Confession, the supernatural food of the Eucharist and listening to the Word of God. Moreover, those of you who are married know that the sacrament of Matrimony is an inexhaustible source of grace for daily life.

Sustained by God's help, generously continue your mission in the service of the city and the Province of Rome. May you always be protected by the maternal care of Blessed Mary, the "*Virgo fidelis*".

I too accompany you with my prayer and, as I sincerely wish all good things for each of you and your families, I bless you all.