



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II
AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE SPIRITUAL RETREAT
HELD FOR THE ROMAN CURIA**

Saturday, 23 February 2002

"Always disciples of Christ".

These days have given us the chance to meditate on what is the fundamental element of our life, being disciples of Christ. We interiorly and constantly experienced and savoured it in the recollection of our "spiritual retreat". It was a great gift of the Lord, for which we give thanks to him, at the end of this week of intense reflection and prayer.

We address our gratitude for his expert meditations to Cardinal Cláudio Hummes; I say "our" because I am sure of interpreting correctly your feelings, dear brothers who have been with me during the retreat. For a certain number of days, dear Brother, you have had to leave your great flock of São Paulo of Brazil where you are Archbishop, to be concerned with this "little flock" of the Vatican. Heartfelt thanks for having guided us through the rich pastures of revelation and of Catholic tradition with the care, the wisdom and sureness of the Good Shepherd.

These days of recollection and contemplation helped us to rediscover with joy the inexhaustible grace of our Christian and apostolic vocation. The Spirit has once again made us understand that our whole life is centred on Christ, the Revealer of the Father. In his Passover of death and resurrection, He established us as his people, gathered around the Eucharistic table, the Sacrament of his saving sacrifice and real presence among us until the end of time.

The deep *consciousness of our being disciples*, that thanks to you, Cardinal Hummes, we have revived, impels us to courageous dedication in our ministry to the People of God. Each one now returns to his work. Even you, dear Brother, will return to your diocese. When you are once more with your people, take to the faithful, and especially to the babies and those who suffer, my warm

greetings and the assurance of my prayer.

Let us continue our penitential journey towards Easter, the path of spiritual renewal for the whole Church. May Mary, who has been present continuously in these days of listening and of prayer, go with us. To you, Cardinal Cláudio Hummes, and to all of you, dear Brothers, my Blessing.