



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO THREE GROUPS OF PILGRIMS

Saturday, 13 December 2003

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

1. I am very happy to meet with you and cordially welcome each one.

I greet, in the first place, Hon. President Mario Pescante and the members of the 49 *European Olympic Committees*, participating in the annual Assembly of the International Olympic Committee. I welcome this occasion to emphasize once again the value and importance of sport, especially in the formation of young people. Europe is the cradle of modern sport, descended from the athletic training of the ancient Greeks marked by reciprocal respect and friendship. May the well-known motto of modern Olympics - "*Citius, Altius, Fortius*" - continue to be imprinted on the athletic activity of the new generations.

2. I then greet the group of the *Italian Optics Association* and the *Italian Association for Eye Disease Research*. May St Lucy, your Patroness, whose feast we are celebrating today, help you to continue with ever great effort your activity of helping people with eye problems. This is an important service that you offer to society.

3. Furthermore, I turn my thought to you, members of the "*Interdis*" group, and I thank you for today's visit. I am also grateful for the generous support you give to the Pope's initiatives of charity for the good of the neediest.

Dear brothers and sisters, as Holy Christmas comes closer, I express fervent best wishes to you and your families, and assure each one of you of my prayers. I cordially bless you all.
