



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO HON. MR ROMANO PRODI
PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION***

Thursday, 28 October 2004

Mr President, 1. I greet you and the distinguished figures who have accompanied you very warmly, and I thank you for this kind visit. You are here in Rome in these days for the solemn act of the signing of the European Constitution by the 25 States that the European Union includes today. The place chosen, the very one where the European Community was born in 1957, has a clearly symbolic value: indeed, one knows Rome stands for the spread of universal juridical and spiritual values. 2. The Holy See encouraged the formation of the European Union even before it acquired any juridical framework, and has subsequently followed it with active interest through its various stages. It has always felt duty-bound to express openly the just expectations of the large number of the Christian citizens of Europe who requested its involvement. The Holy See, therefore, has reminded everyone that Christianity in its various manifestations has contributed to forming the common conscience of the European Peoples and has made a great contribution to shaping their civilization. Regardless of whether or not it is recognized in the official documents, this is an undeniable fact that no historian will be able to forget. 3. Today I would like to congratulate you in particular, Mr President, for the work carried out during your mandate as head of the European Commission. At the same time, with regard to the difficulties concerning the new Commission that have arisen in the past few days, I express the hope that it will be possible to find a solution of reciprocal respect in a spirit of harmony among all the bodies concerned. Mr President, I invoke the Blessing of the Lord upon you, upon the dignitaries who have accompanied you, upon all the Representatives of the States who have gathered in Rome and will shortly be signing the Constitution and upon all the Peoples of Europe. May the European Union always express the best of the great traditions of its Member States, work actively on an international scale for peace among the Peoples and offer generous assistance for the development of the neediest people on the other continents.

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