



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE MEMBERS ATTENDING THE CONGRESS
OF ABBOTS AND PRIORS CONVENTUAL
OF THE BENEDICTINE CONFEDERATION
ON "COMMUNION INTERNATIONALIS BENEDICTARUM"**

Thursday, 23 September 2004

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

1. I welcome you with great affection. I am delighted that you have included in your Congress a meeting with the Successor of Peter, and I thank Fr Wolf Notker for his courteous words introducing it.

I have listened to your troubles and worries. Do not let the problems of our time discourage you. God continues his work in you and with you in his own way, as Jesus foretold when speaking to his disciples: *"In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world"* (Jn 16: 33).

2. *Be faithful to your history.* Our secularized world is indebted to you for the witness of your communities that put *God in the centre place*. Many Bishops are asking to have in their Dioceses these vital spaces of encountering the Lord. Through the liturgy, study and work, may you be an example of Christian life that is fully oriented to God, respectful of humankind and of creation.

I am aware of your contacts with *monks and nuns of other religions*: these are important relationships that can prove fruitful. I urge you to deepen *ecumenical relations* with our brothers and sisters of *Eastern Europe*. Monasticism is a natural platform for mutual understanding. This is extremely important at this moment in history in order to preserve the Christian roots of Europe.

3. I am pleased that as the great *Benedictine Family*, you are increasingly rediscovering your

common heritage. Dear brothers and sisters, continue on your way, following in the footsteps of St Benedict and St Scholastica: "*Prefer nothing whatsoever to Christ*" (RB, 72, 11). Faithful to this rule of life, you will experience a future full of God's gifts.

May the Blessed Virgin Mary obtain them for you. I entrust you to her, as I wholeheartedly bless you and all your communities.