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SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

N. 0229

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UDIENZA AI MEMBRI DELLA "PAPAL FOUNDATION"

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Alle 11.40 di questa mattina, nella Sala del Concistoro del Palazzo Apostolico Vaticano, il Santo Padre Giovanni Paolo II ha ricevuto in Udienza i Membri della "Papal Foundation" ed ha loro rivolto il discorso che pubblichiamo di seguito:

• DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE

Dear Cardinal Bevilacqua,

Your Eminences,

Your Excellency,

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Once more I have the pleasure of greeting you, the members of the Papal Foundation, on your annual visit to Rome. I welcome you today with the words that our Risen Savior spoke to his disciples on the evening of that first Easter Sunday almost two thousand years ago: "Peace be with you" (*Jn* 20:19).

Yes, the Lord's abiding gift to his Church and to his people in every age is the gift of his peace, his reassuring presence with us always, "until the close of the age" (*Mt* 28:20). And it is the responsibility of those who believe and proclaim that the Lord is truly risen from the dead to bring this gift of his peace to others, especially to those who are poor or suffering, to those who are neglected or oppressed, to those whose cries go unheeded, whose hopes seem always shattered. I myself cannot fail to feel this obligation in a particular way, for the charge given by the Risen Lord to the Apostle Peter, the task of "feeding his lambs" and "tending his sheep" (cf. *Jn* 21:15-17), falls in a special way to Peter's Successor. The Bishop of Rome, in fact, is entrusted with the care of all the Churches; he is called to use every means at his disposal to assist and strengthen those communities most in need of spiritual and material care.

It is for this reason, dear friends, that I am most grateful to you: the support which you give through the Papal Foundation allows so many good works to be carried out in the name of Christ and his Church. The many programs and projects funded by grants made available by the Papal Foundation enable the Church's Easter proclamation of joy, hope and peace to reach the ears, minds and hearts of people in many parts of the world. The generous sharing of your time, talents and treasures in this way shows forth your love of the Successor of Peter and gives eloquent expression to the fraternal communion which marks the lives of those who know the Lord and experience "the power of his resurrection" (*Phil* 3:10).

At the beginning of the Third Christian Millennium, renewed and strengthened by the grace-filled Jubilee encounter with the One who is the living source of our hope, we are bid to set out once more on our journey of faith and service, with the assurance that the Risen Christ himself walks by our side. Entrusting all of you to the loving intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the model for all discipleship and the "sure guide for our steps" (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 58), I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing to you and your families as a pledge of joy and peace in the Risen Savior.

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