lent



tions engaged in the work of solidarity which is the education of the illiterate. I speak particularly to social and religious organizations, to teachers, schoolchildren and students, to all people of good will, and I invite them to share still more generously their material and cultural goods: I hope they will do so in their own localities, and support the work of organizations specifically involved in promoting literacy in other parts of the world.

5. Progress in educating the illiterate will also make further evangelization possible, this to the extent that literacy will enable each of our brothers and sisters to grasp the Christian message in a more personal manner and to reinforce listening to the word of God by reading it themselves. Making direct access to the holy Scriptures possible for the greatest possible number of people, and in their own language, can only enrich the reflection and meditation of those seeking the meaning and direction of their lives.

I strongly urge the pastors of the church to take to heart and encourage this great service to humanity. For it is a matter of linking to the proclamation of the good news the transmission of a knowledge which enables our brothers and sisters to assimilate for themselves the meaning of this message, to experience all its richness and to make it an integral part of their culture. In our time, can we not say that to work for literacy is to contribute to the building up of communion in real and active brotherly love?

6. Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus and our own mother, I pray that God will hear our voices and touch our hearts, that this Lent of 1995 will mark a new stage in the conversion which our Lord Jesus Christ preached, from the very beginning of his messianic mission, for the sake of all nations (cf. Mt 4:12-17).

In this hope, I cordially impart to you my apostolic blessing.



