



23 October 1986



**Address to the Working Group on the Subject
'Molecular Mechanisms of Carcinogenic and Anti-tumor Activity'**

The Supreme Pontiff welcomes the Academy's constant commitment to combating cancer and observes that although the scientists present at the meeting come from the developed countries, the benefits of their work are 'intended for all the world'.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

For the third time in its history, the Pontifical Academy of Sciences directs its attention towards cancer, an illness that destroys the organism of a great number of human beings and is terrifying in the diversity of its forms.

In 1948 a study week was devoted to 'The Biological Problems of Cancer'. In 1977 another study week researched 'The Role of Non-specific Immunity in the Prevention and Treatment of Cancer'. At the present meeting you have chosen the subject 'Molecular Mechanisms of Carcinogenic Anti-tumor Activity'.

The working group gathered this week in the Pontifical Academy of Sciences is composed of renowned scientists from around the world, who have devoted their activity to investigate, at the most fundamental level, the origins of cancer, the means to cure it and, if possible, the ways to prevent it.

You come from the most developed countries, which have the material means of conducting research at such a fundamental level and on such a large scale. The benefits of your work are, however, intended for all the world.

The particular feature of this working group is to combine, in the same exploration and discussion, the mechanism of action of carcinogenic and anti-tumor agents, those which cause the terrible disease and those which help to cure it. The discussions thus bear on the suffering of man, but also on his efforts to find a remedy for it.

Another striking feature of this working group is that it tries to go into the very fundamentals of the problem by investigating the molecular mechanisms of the events which are responsible for the action of the carcinogenic and anti-tumor agents.

I wish to express my gratitude to the Pontifical Academy for having chosen such an important and urgent subject. I also thank the eminent scientists who have worked vigorously during these days. May your research achieve the results necessary to defeat this terrible scourge which is cancer!

God bless you and your families.