

# Pope John Paul II Writings on Young People Sourcebook

September 14, 2002  
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**December 7, 1965**

MESSAGE OF THE II VATICAN COUNCIL TO YOUTH

"Lastly, it is to you, young men and women of the world, that the Council wishes to address its final message. For it is you who are to receive the torch from the hands of your elders and to live in the world at the period of the most gigantic transformations ever realized in its history. It is you who receiving the best of the example of the teaching of your parents and your teachers, are to form the society of tomorrow. You will either save yourselves or you will perish with it.

For four years the Church has been working to rejuvenate her image in order to respond the better to the design of her Founder, the great Living One, the Christ who is eternally young. At the term of this imposing re-examination of life, she now turns to you. It is for you, youth, especially for you that the Church now comes through her Council to enkindle your light, the light which illuminates the future, your future.

The Church is anxious that this society that you are going to build up should respect the dignity, the liberty, and the rights of individuals. These individuals are you. The Church is particularly anxious that this society should allow free expansion to her treasure ever ancient and ever new, namely faith, and that your souls may be able to bask freely in its helpful light. She has confidence that you will find such strength and such joy that you will not be tempted, as were some of your elders, to yield to the seductions of egoistic or hedonistic philosophies or to those of despair and annihilation, and that in the face of atheism, a phenomenon of lassitude and old age, you will know how to affirm your faith in life and what gives meaning to it, that is to say, the certitude of the existence of a just and good God.

It is in the name of this God and of His Son, Jesus, that we exhort you to open your hearts to the dimensions of the world, to heed the appeal of your brothers, to place your youthful energies at their service. Fight against all egoism. Refuse to give free course to the instincts of violence and hatred which beget wars and all their train of miseries. Be generous, pure, respectful, and sincere, and build in enthusiasm a better world than your elders had.

The Church looks to you with confidence and with love. Rich with a long past ever living in her, and marching on toward human perfection in time and the ultimate destinies of history and of life, the Church is the real youth of the world. She possesses what constitutes the strength and the charm of youth, that is to say, the ability to rejoice with what is beginning, to give oneself unreservedly, to renew oneself and to set out again for new conquests. Look upon the Church and you will find in her the face of Christ, the genuine, humble, and wise Hero, the Prophet of truth and love, the Companion and Friend of youth. It is in the name of Christ that we salute you, that we exhort and bless you" (7 December 1965).

# 1985

**March 31, 1985**

1ST WORLD YOUTH DAY - APOSTOLIC LETTER TO THE YOUTH OF THE WORLD  
Pope John Paul II

APOSTOLIC LETTER  
DILECTI AMICI  
OF POPE  
JOHN PAUL II  
TO THE YOUTH OF THE WORLD  
ON THE OCCASION OF INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR

Dear Friends,

Good wishes for International Youth Year

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1. "Always be prepared to make a defence to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you".(1)

This is the exhortation that I address to you young people at the beginning of the present year. 1985 has been proclaimed by the United Nations Organization International Youth Year, and this is of great significance, first of all for yourselves, and also for people of all ages-individuals, communities and the whole of society. It is of particular significance also for the Church, as the custodian of fundamental truths and values and at the same time as the minister of the eternal destinies that man the great human family have in God himself.

Since man is the fundamental and at the same time the daily way of the Church,(2) it is easy to understand why the Church attributes special importance to the period of youth as a key stage in the life of every human being. You young people are the ones who embody this youth: you are the youth of the nations and societies, the youth of every family and of all humanity; you are also the youth of the Church. We are all looking to you, for all of us, thanks to you, in a certain sense continually become young again. So your youth is not just your own property, your personal property or the property of a generation: it belongs to the whole of that space that every man traverses in his life's journey, and at the same time it is a special possession belonging to everyone. It is a possession of humanity itself.

In you there is hope, for you belong to the future, just as the future belongs to you. For hope is always linked to the future; it is the expectation of "future good things". As a Christian virtue, it is linked to the expectation of those eternal good things which God has promised to man in Jesus Christ.(3) And at the same time, this hope, as both a Christian and a human virtue, is the expectation of the good things which man will build, using the talents given him by Providence.

In this sense the future belongs to you young people, just as it once belonged to the generation of those who are now adults, and precisely together with them it has become the present reality. Responsibility for this present reality and for its shape and many different forms lies first of all with adults. To you belongs responsibility for what will one day become reality together with yourselves, but which still lies in the future.

When we say that the future belongs to you, we are thinking in categories of human impermanence, which is always a journey towards the future. When we say that the future depends on you, we are thinking in ethical categories, according to the demands of moral responsibility, which requires us to attribute to man as a person-and to the communities and societies which are made up of persons-the fundamental value of human acts, resolves, undertaking and intentions.

This dimension is also a dimension proper to Christian and human hope. And in this dimension the first and principal wish that the Church expresses for you young people, through my lips, in this Year dedicated to Youth, is this: that you should "always be prepared to make a defence to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you".(4)

Christ speaks to young people

2. These words, once written by the Apostle Peter to the first generation of Christians, have a relationship with the whole of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Perhaps we shall see this relationship more clearly when we meditate upon Christ's conversation with the young man, recorded by the Evangelists.(5) Among the many texts of the Bible this is the one that especially deserves to be recalled at this point.

To the question: "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?", Jesus replies first with the question: "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone". Then he goes on: "You know the commandments: 'Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honour your father and mother'"'.(6) With these words Jesus reminds his questioner of some of the main commandments of the Decalogue.

But the conversation does not end here. For the young man declares: "Teacher, all these things I have observed from my youth". Then, writes the Evangelist, "Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said to him,

"You lack one thing; go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me".(7)

At this point the atmosphere of the meeting changes. The Evangelist writes that "at that saying his countenance fell, and he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions."(8)

There are still other Gospel passages in which Jesus of Nazareth meets young people-particularly evocative are the two raisings from the dead: of the daughter of Jairus (9) and of the son of the widow of Nain (10)-but we can say without hesitation that the conversation mentioned above is the meeting which is the most complete and richest in content. It can also be said that this meeting has a more universal and timeless character, in other words that in a certain sense it holds good constantly and continually, throughout the centuries and generations. Christ speaks in this way to a young person, a boy or a girl; his conversation takes place in different parts of the world, in the midst of the different nations, races and cultures. Each of you in this conversation is potentially the one he will speak to.

At the same time, all the elements of the description and all the words uttered in that conversation by both sides have a significance which is absolutely essential, and have a specific weight. One can say that these words contain a particularly profound truth about man in general, and, above all, the truth about youth. They are really important for young people.

Permit me therefore to link my reflections in the present Letter mainly to this meeting and this Gospel text. Perhaps in this way it will be easier for you to develop your own conversation with Christ-a conversation which is of fundamental and essential importance for a young person.

Youth is a special treasure

3. We shall begin from what we find at the end of the Gospel text. The young man goes away sorrowful, "for he had great possessions".

There is no doubt that this expression refers to the material possessions of which the young man was owner or heir. Perhaps this is the situation of some, but it is not typical. And therefore the Evangelist's words suggest another way of putting the matter: it is a question of the fact that youth is in itself (independently of any material goods) a special treasure of man, of a young man or woman, and most often it is lived by young people as a specific treasure. I say most often, but not always, not invariably, for in the world there is no lack of people who for various reasons do not experience youth as a treasure. We shall have to speak of this separately.

There are however reasons-and they are also objective reasons-for thinking of youth as a special treasure that a person experiences at this particular period of his or her life. It is a period which is certainly distinguished from the period of childhood (it is precisely the time when one leaves the years of childhood), just as it is also distinguished from the period of full maturity. For the period of youth is the time of a particularly intense discovery of the human "I" and of the properties and capacities connected with it. Before the inner gaze of the developing personality of the young man or woman, there is gradually and successively revealed that specific and in a sense unique and unrepeatable potentiality of a concrete humanity, in which there is as it were inscribed the whole plan of future life. Life presents itself as the carrying-out of that plan: as "self-fulfillment" .

The question naturally deserves an explanation from many points of view; but to express it in a few words, one can say that the treasure which is youth reveals itself in precisely this shape or form. This is the treasure of discovering and at the same time of organizing, choosing, foreseeing and making the first personal decisions, decisions that will be important for the future in the strictly personal dimension of human existence. At the same time, these decisions are of considerable social importance. The young man in the Gospel was precisely in this existential phase, as we can deduce from the questions he asks in his conversation with Jesus. Therefore also the final words about "great possessions"-meaning wealth-can be understood precisely in this sense: the treasure which is youth itself.

But we must ask the question: does this treasure of youth necessarily alienate man from Christ? The Evangelist certainly does not say this: rather, an examination of the text leads us to a different conclusion.

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The decision to go away from Christ was definitively influenced only by external riches, what the young man possessed ("possessions"). Not by what he was! What he was, as precisely a young man-the interior treasure hidden in youth-had led him to Jesus. And it had also impelled him to ask those questions which in the clearest way concern the plan for the whole of life. What must I do? "What must I do to inherit eternal life?". What must I do so that my life may have full value and full meaning?

The youth of each one of you, dear friends, is a treasure that is manifested precisely in these questions. Man asks himself these questions throughout his life. But in the time of youth they are particularly urgent, indeed insistent. And it is good that this is so. These questions precisely show the dynamism of the development of the human personality, the dynamism which is proper to your age. You ask yourselves these questions sometimes with impatience, and at the same time you yourselves understand that the reply to them cannot be hurried or superficial the reply must have a specific and definitive weight. It is a question here of a reply that concerns the whole of life, that embraces the whole of human existence.

These essential questions are asked in a special way by those members of your generation whose lives have been weighed down since childhood by suffering: by some physical lack or defect, some handicap or limitation, or by a difficult family or social situation. If at the same time their minds develop normally, the question about the meaning and value of life becomes for them all the more essential and also particularly tragic, for from the very beginning the question is marked by the pain of existence. And how many such young people there are among the multitudes of young people all over the world! In the different nations and societies; in individual families! How many are forced from childhood to live in an institution or hospital, condemned to a certain passivity which can make them begin to feel that they are of no use to humanity!

So can we say that their youth too is a interior treasure? To whom should we put this question? To whom should they put this essential question? It seems that here Christ alone is the competent one to ask, the one whom no one can fully replace.

God is Love

4. Christ replies to the young man in the Gospel. He says: "No one is good but God alone". We have already heard what the young man had asked: "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?". How must I act so that my life will have meaning and value? We could translate his question into the language of our own times. In this context Christ's answer means this: only God is the ultimate basis of all values; only he gives the definitive meaning to our human existence.

Only God is good, which means this: in him and him alone all values have their first source and final completion; he is "the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end".(11) Only in him do values and their authenticity and definitive confirmation. Without him-without the reference to God-the whole world of created values remains as it were suspended in an absolute vacuum. It also loses its transparency, its expressiveness. Evil is put forward as a good and good itself is rejected. Are we not shown this by the very experience of our own time, wherever God has been removed beyond the limits of evaluations, estimations and actions?

Why is God alone good? Because he is love. Christ gives this answer in the words of the Gospel, and above all by the witness of his own life and death: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son".(12) God is good precisely because he "is love".(13)

As we have said, the question about the value of life, about the meaning of life, forms part of the singular treasure of youth. It comes from the very heart of the riches and the anxieties linked with that plan for life that must be undertaken and carried out. Still more so, when youth is tested by personal suffering, or is profoundly aware of the suffering of others; when it experiences a powerful shock at the sight of the many kinds of evil that exist in the world; finally, when it comes face to face with the mystery of sin, of human iniquity (*mysterium iniquitatis*).<sup>(14)</sup> Christ's reply is this: "Only God is good"; only God is love. This reply may seem difficult, but at the same time it is firm and it is true; it bears within itself the definitive solution. How I pray that you, my young friends, will hear Christ's reply in the most personal way possible; that you will and the interior path which enables you to grasp it, accept it and undertake its accomplishment!

Such is Christ in the conversation with the young man. Such is Christ in the conversation with each of you. When you say: "Good Teacher", he asks: "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone". And therefore: the fact that I am good bears witness to God. "He who has seen me has seen the Father".(15) Thus speaks Christ, the teacher and friend, Christ crucified and risen: always the same yesterday and today and for ever.(16)

This is the kernel, the essential point of the reply to these questions which you young people put to him through the treasure which is within you, which is rooted in your youth. Your youth opens different prospects before you; it offers you as a task the plan for the whole of your lives. Hence the question about values; hence the question about the meaning of life, about truth, about good and evil. When Christ in his reply to you tells you to refer all this to God, at the same time he shows you what the source and foundation of this is in yourselves. For each one of you is the image and likeness of God through the very act of creation.(17) Precisely this image and likeness makes you put the questions that you must ask yourselves. These questions show how man without God cannot understand himself, and cannot even fulfil himself without God. Jesus Christ came into the world first of all in order to make each one of us aware of this. Without him this fundamental dimension of the truth about man would easily sink into obscurity. However, "the light has come into the world",(18) "and the darkness has not overcome it".(19)

The question about eternal life

5. What must I do so that my life may have value, have meaning? This earnest question comes from the lips of the young man in the Gospel in the following form: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?". Is a person who puts the question in this form speaking a language still intelligible to the people of today? Are we not the generation whose horizon of existence is completely filled by the world and temporal progress? We think primarily in earthly categories. If we go beyond the limits of our planet, we do so in order to launch interplanetary flights, transmit signals to the other planets and send cosmic probes in their direction.

All this has become the content of our modern civilization. Science together with technology has discovered in an incomparable way man's possibilities with regard to matter, and they have also succeeded in dominating the interior world of his thoughts, capacities, tendencies and passions.

But at the same time it is clear that, when we place ourselves in the presence of Christ, when he becomes the confidant of the questionings of our youth, we cannot put the question differently from how that young man put it: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?". Any other question about the meaning and value of our life would be, in the presence of Christ, insufficient and unessential.

For Christ is not only the "good teacher" who shows the paths of life on earth. He is the witness to that definitive destiny which the human person has in God himself. He is the witness to man's immortality. The Gospel which he proclaimed with his lips is definitively sealed by the Cross and the Resurrection in the Paschal Mystery. "Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him".(20) In his Resurrection Christ has also become the permanent "sign of contradiction"(21) before all programmes incapable of leading man beyond the frontier of death. Indeed at this frontier they silence all man's questionings about the value and meaning of life. In the face of all these programmes, the various ways of looking at the world and the various ideologies, Christ constantly repeats: "I am the resurrection and the life".(22)

And so, dear brothers and dear sisters, if you wish to talk to Christ and to accept all the truth of his testimony, you must on the one hand "love the world"-for God "so loved the world that he gave his only Son"(23)-and at the same time you must acquire interior detachment with regard to all this rich and fascinating reality that makes up "the world". You must make up your mind to ask the question about eternal life. For, the form of this world is passing away ",(24) and each of us is subject to this passing. Man is born with the prospect of the day of his death in the dimension of the visible world; at the same time, man, whose interior reason for existence is to go beyond himself, also bears within himself everything whereby he goes beyond the world.

Everything whereby man, in himself, goes beyond the world- though he is rooted in it-is explained by the image and likeness of God which is inscribed in humanity from the beginning. And everything whereby man

goes beyond the world not only justifies the question about eternal life but in fact makes it indispensable. This is the question that people have long been asking themselves, not only in the sphere of Christianity but also outside it. You too must find the courage to ask it, like the young man in the Gospel. Christianity teaches us to understand temporal existence from the perspective of the Kingdom of God, from the perspective of eternal life. Without eternal life, temporal existence, however rich, however highly developed in all aspects, in the end brings man nothing other than the ineluctable necessity of death.

Now there is an opposition between youth and death. Death seems far distant from youth. And it is. But since youth means the plan for the whole of life-the plan drawn up in accordance with the criterion of meaning and value during youth too it is essential to ask the question about the end. Human experience left to itself says the same as Sacred Scripture: "It is appointed for men to die once".(25) The inspired writer adds: "And after that comes judgment".(26) And Christ says: "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die".(27) So ask Christ, like the young man in the Gospel: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?"

#### On morality and conscience

6. To this question Jesus replies: "You know the commandments", and he immediately lists these commandments, which form part of the Decalogue. Moses received them one day on Mount Sinai, at the moment of the Covenant of God with Israel. They were written on tablets of stone (28) and for every Israelite were the daily indication of the path to be taken.(29) The young man who speaks to Christ naturally knows by heart the commandments of the Decalogue; indeed, he can declare with joy: "All these things I have observed from my youth".(30)

We have to presuppose that in the dialogue which Christ develops with each one of you young people the same question is repeated: "Do you know the commandments?" It will be infallibly repeated, because the commandments form part of the Covenant between God and humanity. The commandments determine the essential bases of behavior, decide the moral value of human acts, and remain in organic relationship with man's vocation to eternal life, with the establishment of God's Kingdom in people and among people. In the words of divine Revelation is inscribed the clear code of morality, of which the tablets of the Decalogue of Mount Sinai remain the key- point, and the culmination of which is found in the Gospel: in the Sermon on the Mount(31) and in the commandment of love.(32)

At the same time this code of morality is written in yet another form. It is inscribed in the moral conscience of humanity, in such a way that those who do not know the commandments, in other words the law revealed by God, "are a law to themselves".(33) Thus writes Saint Paul in his Letter to the Romans, and he immediately adds: "They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness".(34)

Here we touch upon matters of supreme importance for your youth and for that plan of life that emerges from it.

This plan accepts the prospect of eternal life first of all through the truth of the deeds on which it will be built. This truth of deeds has its foundation in that twofold presentation of the moral law: the one written on the tablets of the Decalogue of Moses and in the Gospel, and the one inscribed in man's moral conscience. And the conscience "presents itself as a witness" to that law, as Saint Paul writes. This conscience-in the words of the Letter to the Romans-is the "conflicting thoughts" which "accuse or perhaps excuse them".(35) Everyone knows how closely these words correspond to our interior reality: each of us from our youth experiences the voice of conscience.

Therefore when Jesus, in his conversation with the young man, lists the commandments: "Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honour your father and mother",(36) the upright conscience responds with an interior reaction to man's corresponding deeds: it accuses or excuses. But the conscience must not be distorted; the fundamental formulation of the principles of morality must not surrender to deformation by any kind of relativism or utilitarianism.

Dear young friends! The response which Jesus gives to his questioner in the Gospel is addressed to each one of you. Christ asks you about the state of your moral awareness, and at the same time he questions you about



the state of your conscience. This is a key question for man: it is the fundamental question of your youth, one that concerns the whole plan of life which must be formed precisely in youth. Its value is the one most closely connected with the relationship of each of you with moral good and evil. The value of this plan depends in an essential way on the authenticity and rectitude of your conscience. It also depends on its sensitivity.

So we find ourselves here at a crucial moment, when at every step time and eternity meet at a level which is proper to man. It is the level of the conscience, the level of moral values: the conscience is the most important dimension of time and history. For history is written not only by the events which in a certain sense happen "from outside"; it is written first of all "from within": it is the history of human consciences, of moral victories and defeats. Here too the essential greatness of man finds its foundation: his authentically human dignity. This is that interior treasure whereby man continually goes beyond himself in the direction of eternity. If it is true that "it is established that people would die only once", it is also true that man carries with him the treasure of conscience, the deposit of good and evil, across the frontier of death, in order that, in the sight of him who is holiness itself, he may find the ultimate and definitive truth about his whole life: "after that comes judgment".(37)

This is just what happens in the conscience: in the interior truth of our acts, in a certain sense, there is constantly present the dimension of eternal life. And simultaneously the same conscience, through moral values, imprints the most expressive seal upon the life of the generations, upon the history and culture of human environments, societies, nations and of all humanity.

In this field how much depends on each one of you !

"Jesus, looking upon him, loved him"

7. Continuing our examination of Christ's conversation with the young man, we now enter another phase. It is a new and decisive one. The young man has received the essential and fundamental response to the question: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?", and this response coincides with the whole journey of his life up to this point: "All these I have observed from my youth". How ardently I hope that the journey of the life of each one of you up to this point has similarly coincided with Christ's response! Indeed, it is my hope that your youth will provide you with a sturdy basis of sound principles, that your conscience will attain in these years of your youth that mature clear-sightedness that during your whole lives will enable each one of you to remain always a "person of conscience", a "person of principles", a "person who inspires trust", in other words, a person who is credible. The moral personality formed in this way constitutes the most important contribution that you can make to life in the community, to the family, to society, to professional activity and also to cultural and political activity, and finally to the community of the Church-to all those spheres with which you are already or will one day be connected.

It is a question here of a full and profound human authenticity and of an equal authenticity of the development of the human personality, female or male, with all the characteristics which make up the unrepeatable features of this personality, and which at the same time and in different ways have an impact on the life of the community and of the various environments, beginning with the family. Each one of you must in some way contribute to the richness of these communities, first of all by means of what he or she is. Is it not in this direction that the youth which is the "personal" treasure of each of you tends? Man sees himself, his own humanity, both as his own interior world and as the specific area of his being "with others", "for others".

Precisely here the commandments of the Decalogue and of the Gospel take on a decisive meaning, especially the commandment of love which opens the human person to God and neighbor. For charity is the "bond of perfection".(38) Through charity, man and human fraternity come to fuller maturity. For this reason, love is the greatest(39) and the first of all the commandments, as Christ teaches; (40) and in it all the others are included and made one.

My wish for each of you therefore is that the paths of your youth may meet in Christ, that you may be able to confirm before him, by the witness of your consciences, this evangelical moral code, to the values of which so many individuals of noble spirit have in the course of the generations in some way drawn near.

This is not the appropriate place for quoting the confirmations of this fact which run through the whole history of humanity. What is certain is that from the most ancient times the dictate of conscience has guided every human subject towards an objective moral norm which finds concrete expression in respect for the other person and in the principle of not doing to that person what one would not wish done to oneself.(41)

Here we see already clearly emerging that objective morality of which Saint Paul declares that it is "written on their hearts" and that "their conscience also bears witness" to it.(42) The Christian readily perceives in it a ray from the creating Word that enlightens every man;(43) and precisely because he is a follower of that Word made flesh he rises to the higher law of the Gospel which positively imposes upon him-in the commandment of love-the duty to do to neighbor all the good that he would wish to be done to himself. He thus seals the inner voice of conscience with absolute acceptance of Christ and his word.

It is also my hope that, after you have made the discernment of the essential and important questions for you youth, for the plan of the whole life that lies before you, you will experience what the Gospel means when it says: "Jesus, looking upon him, loved him". May you experience a look like that! May you experience the truth that he, Christ, looks upon you with love!

He looks with love upon every human being. The Gospel confirms this at every step. One can also say that this "loving look" of Christ contains, as it were, a summary and synthesis of the entire Good News. If we would seek the beginning of this look, we must turn back to the Book of Genesis, to that instant when, after the creation of man "male and female", God saw that "it was very good".(44) That very first look of the Creator is reflected in the look of Christ which accompanies his conversation with the young man in the Gospel.

We know that Christ will confirm and seal this look with the redemptive Sacrifice of the Cross, because precisely by means of this Sacrifice that "look" reached a particular depth of love. In it is contained an affirmation of man and of humanity such as only he is capable of-Christ the Redeemer and Bridegroom. Only he "knows what is in every man":(45) he knows man's weakness, but he also and above all knows his dignity.

My wish for each of you is that you may discover this look of Christ, and experience it in all its depth. I do not know at what moment in your life. I think that it will happen when you need it most: perhaps in suffering, perhaps together with the witness of a pure conscience, as in the case of that young man in the Gospel, or perhaps precisely in an opposite situation: together with the sense of guilt, with remorse of conscience. For Christ looked at Peter too in the hour of his fall: when he had three times denied his Master.(46)

Man needs this loving look. He needs to know that he is loved, loved eternally and chosen from eternity.(47) At the same time, this eternal love of divine election accompanies man during life as Christ's look of love. And perhaps most powerfully at the moment of trial, humiliation, persecution, defeat, when our humanity is as it were blotted out in the eyes of other people, insulted and trampled upon. At that moment the awareness that the Father has always loved us in his Son, that Christ always loves each of us, becomes a solid support for our whole human existence. When everything would make us doubt ourselves and the meaning of our life, then this look of Christ, the awareness of the love that in him has shown itself more powerful than any evil and destruction, this awareness enables us to survive.

My wish for you then is that you may experience what the young man in the Gospel experienced: "Jesus, looking upon him, loved him".

"Follow me"

8. From an examination of the Gospel text we see that this look was, so to speak, Christ's response to the testimony which the young man had given of his life up to that moment, of having acted according to God's commandments: "All these I have observed from my youth".

At the same time, this "look of love" was the introduction to the concluding phase of the conversation. In Matthew's account, it was the young man himself who opened this phase, since not only did he declare the

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personal fidelity to the commandments of the Decalogue which had marked all his previous conduct, but at the same time he asked a new question. In fact he asked: "What do I still lack? ".(48)

This question is a very important one. It shows that in the moral conscience of a person and more precisely of a young person who is forming the plan for his or her whole life, there is hidden an aspiration to "something more". This aspiration makes itself felt in various ways, and we can also observe it among those who seem to be far from our religion.

Among the followers of non-Christian religions, especially Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam, we find that for thousands of years there have been hosts of "spiritual men", individuals who often from early youth leave everything in order to live in poverty and purity in the quest for the Absolute that exists beyond the appearances of material things. They strive to attain a state of perfect liberation, they take refuge in God with love and confidence, and with all their souls try to submit to his hidden decrees. They seem impelled by a mysterious inner voice which makes itself heard in their spirit, as it were echoing Saint Paul's words: "The form of this world is passing away", (49) and which guides them to seek things which are greater and more enduring: "Seek the things that are above". (50) They seek the goal with all their strength, working hard to purify their spirit and sometimes reaching the point of making their lives a gift of love to the godhead. They thus become living examples to the people around them, by their very conduct showing the primacy of eternal values over the elusive and sometimes ambiguous values of the society in which they live.

But it is in the Gospel that the aspiration to perfection, to "something more", finds its explicit point of reference. In the Sermon on the Mount Christ confirms the whole moral law, at the centre of which are the Mosaic tablets of the Ten Commandments. But at the same time he confers upon these commandments a new, evangelical meaning. And, as we have already said, it is all concentrated around love, not only as a commandment but also as a gift: "The love of Christ has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us". (51)

In this new context one also comes to understand the programme of the eight Beatitudes which begins the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's Gospel. (52)

In this same context the series of commandments which constitute the fundamental code of Christian morality is completed by the series of evangelical counsels, which in a special way express and make concrete Christ's call to perfection, which is a call to holiness.

When the young man asks about the "more": "What do I still lack?", Jesus looks upon him with love, and this love finds here a new meaning. Man is carried interiorly, by the hand of the Holy Spirit, from a life according to the commandments to a life in the awareness of the gift, and Christ's loving look expresses this interior "transition". And Jesus says: "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." (53)

Yes, my dear young friends! The Christian is capable of living in the dimension of gift. Indeed, this dimension is not only "higher" than the dimension of mere moral obligations known from the commandments but it is also "deeper" and more fundamental. It bears witness to a fuller expression of that plan of life which we begin to construct in our youth. The dimension of gift also creates the mature outline of every human and Christian vocation, as will be said later on.

At this moment, however, I wish to speak to you about the particular meaning of the words which Christ said to the young man. And I do this in the conviction that Christ addresses them in the Church to some of his young questioners in every generation. In ours too. His words therefore signify a particular vocation in the community of the People of God. The Church finds Christ's "Follow me" (54) at the beginning of every call to service in the ministerial priesthood, which simultaneously in the Catholic Church of the Latin Rite is linked to the conscious and free choice of celibacy. The Church finds the same "follow me" of Christ at the beginning of the religious vocation, whereby, through the profession of the evangelical counsels (chastity, poverty and obedience), a man or woman recognizes as his or her own the programme of life which Christ himself lived on earth, for the sake of the Kingdom of God. (55) By professing religious vows, such individuals commit themselves to bearing a particular witness to the love of God above all things, and

likewise to that call to union with God in eternity which is directed to everyone. But there is a need for some to bear an exceptional witness to this before other people.

I limit myself merely to mentioning this matter in the present Letter, since it has already been more fully presented elsewhere and on a number of occasions.(56) I mention it here because in the context of Christ's conversation with the young man it acquires a particular clarity, especially the question of evangelical poverty. I also mention it because Christ's call "Follow me", precisely in this exceptional and charismatic sense, usually makes itself heard in youth; sometimes it is even heard in childhood.

It is for this reason that I wish to say this to all of you young people, in this important phase of the development of your personality as a man or a woman: if such a call comes into your heart, do not silence it! Let it develop into the maturity of a vocation! Respond to it through prayer and fidelity to the commandments! For "the harvest is plentiful" (57) and there is an enormous need for many to be reached by Christ's call "Follow me". There is an enormous need for priests according to the heart of God-and the Church and the world of today have an enormous need of the witness of a life given without reserve to God: the witness of that nuptial love of Christ himself which in a particular way will make the Kingdom of God present among people and bring it nearer to the world.

Permit me then to complete still further the words of Christ the Lord about the harvest being plentiful. Yes, this harvest of the Gospel is plentiful, this harvest of salvation! "But the labourers are few!". Perhaps this is felt more keenly today than in the past, especially in certain countries, as also in certain Institutes of consecrated life and similar Institutes.

"Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest", (58) continues Christ. And these words, especially in our times, become a programme of prayer and action for more priestly and religious vocations. With this programme the Church addresses herself to you, to youth. And you too: pray! And if the fruit of this prayer of the Church comes to life in the depths of your heart, listen to the Master as he says: "Follow me".

The plan of life and the christian vocation

9. These words in the Gospel certainly concern the priestly or religious vocation; but at the same time they help us to understand more deeply the question of vocation in a still wider and more fundamental sense.

One could speak here of the "life" vocation, which in a way is identical with that plan of life which each of you draws up in the period of your youth. But "vocation" means something more than "plan". In this second case I myself am the subject who draws it up, and this corresponds better to the reality of the person which each of you is. This "plan" is a "vocation" inasmuch as in it there make themselves felt the various factors which call. These factors usually make up a particular order of values (also called a "hierarchy of values"), from which emerges an ideal to be realized, an ideal which is attractive to a young heart. In this process the "vocation" becomes a "plan", and the plan begins to be also a vocation.

But given the fact that we are in the presence of Christ and are basing our reflections about youth on Christ's conversation with the young man, that relationship of the "plan of life" to the "life vocation" needs to be stated even more precisely. A human being is a creature and at the same time an adopted child of God in Christ: he is a child of God. Hence during youth a person puts the question, "What must I do?" not only to himself and to other people from whom he can expect an answer, especially his parents and teachers, but he puts it also to God, as his Creator and Father. He puts it in the context of this particular interior sphere in which he has learned to be in a close relationship with God, above all in prayer. He therefore asks God: "What must I do?", what is your plan for my life? Your creative, fatherly plan? What is your will? I wish to do it.

In this context the "plan" takes on the meaning of a "life vocation", as something which is entrusted by God to an individual as a task. Young people, entering into themselves and at the same time entering into conversation with Christ in prayer, desire as it were to read the eternal thought which God the Creator and Father has in their regard. They then become convinced that the task assigned to them by God is left completely to their own freedom, and at the same time is determined by various circumstances of an interior

and exterior nature. Examining these circumstances, the young person, boy or girl, constructs his or her plan of life and at the same time recognizes this plan as the vocation to which God is calling him or her.

I desire therefore to entrust to all of you, the young people to whom this Letter is addressed, this marvelous task which is linked with the discovery before God of each one's life vocation. This is an exciting task. It is a fascinating interior undertaking. In this undertaking your humanity develops and grows, while your young personality acquires ever greater inner maturity. You become rooted in that which each of you is, in order to become that which you must become: for yourself- for other people-for God.

Parallel with the process of discovering one's own "life vocation" there should also be a progressively clearer realization of how this life vocation is at the same time a "Christian vocation".

Here it should be noted that in the period before the Second Vatican Council the concept of "vocation" was applied first of all to the priesthood and religious life, as if Christ had addressed to the young person his evangelical "Follow me" only for these cases. The Council has broadened this way of looking at things. Priestly and religious vocations have kept their particular character and their sacramental and charismatic importance in the life of the People of God. But at the same time the awareness renewed by the Second Vatican Council of the universal sharing of all the baptized in Christ's three-fold prophetic, priestly and kingly mission, (*tria munera*), as also the awareness of the universal vocation to holiness,(59) have led to a realization of the fact that every human life vocation, as a Christian vocation, corresponds to the evangelical call. Christ's "Follow me" makes itself heard on the different paths taken by the disciples and confessors of the divine Redeemer. There are different ways of becoming imitators of Christ-not only by bearing witness to the eschatological Kingdom of truth and love, but also by striving to bring about the transformation of the whole of temporal reality according to the spirit of the Gospel.(60) It is at this point that there also begins the apostolate of the laity, which is inseparable from the very essence of the Christian vocation.

These are the extremely important premises for the plan of life which corresponds to the essential dynamism of your youth. You must examine this plan-independently of the concrete content "of life" with which it will be filled-in the light of the words addressed by Christ to the young man in the Gospel.

You must also rethink-and very profoundly-the meaning of Baptism and Confirmation. For in these two sacraments is contained the fundamental deposit of the Christian life and vocation. From these there begins the path towards the Eucharist, which contains the fullness of the sacramental gifts granted to the Christian: all the Church's spiritual wealth is concentrated in this Sacrament of love. It is also necessary-and always in relationship with the Eucharist-to reflect on the Sacrament of Penance, which is of irreplaceable importance for the formation of the Christian personality, especially if it is linked with spiritual direction, which is a systematic school of the interior life.

I speak briefly of all this, even though each of the Church's Sacraments has its own definite and specific reference to youth and to young people. I trust that this theme will receive detailed treatment from others, particularly pastoral ministers specially appointed to work with young people.

The Church herself-as the Second Vatican Council teaches-is "a kind of sacrament or sign of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind".(61) Every vocation in life, insofar as it is a "Christian" vocation, is rooted in the sacramentality of the Church: it is therefore formed through the Sacraments of our faith. The Sacraments enable us from our youth to open our human "I" to the saving action of God, that is, of the Most Blessed Trinity. They enable us to share in God's life, living the authentic human life to the full. In this way our human life acquires a new dimension and at the same time its Christian originality: awareness of the demands placed on man by the Gospel is matched by awareness of the gift which surpasses everything. "If you knew the gift of God", (62) said Christ, speaking to the Samaritan woman.

"Great sacrament of marriage"

10. Against this vast background that your youthful plan of life acquires in relation to the idea of the Christian vocation, I wish to examine, together with you young people to whom I am addressing this Letter, the question that in a certain sense is at the heart of the youth of all of you. This is one of the central questions of human life, and at the same time one of the central themes of reflection, creativity and

culture. It is also one of the main biblical themes, and one to which I personally have devoted much reflection and analysis. God created human beings: male and female, thereby introducing into the history of the human race that special "duality" together with complete equality, in the matter of human dignity; and with marvelous complementarity, in the matter of the division of the attributes, properties and tasks linked with the masculinity and femininity of the human being.

Thus, this is a theme that is necessarily inscribed in the personal "I" of each one of you. Youth is the period when this great theme affects in an experimental and creative way the soul and body of every young woman and young man, and manifests itself in the youthful conscience together with the fundamental discovery of the personal "I" in all its manifold potentiality. Then also on the horizon of a young heart a new experience occurs: the experience of love, which from the beginning has to be included in that plan of life which youth spontaneously creates and forms.

In each separate case all of this has its own unrepeatable subjective expression, its affective richness, indeed its metaphysical beauty. At the same time, in all of this there is contained a powerful exhortation not to distort this expression, not to destroy this treasure and not to disfigure this beauty. Be convinced that this call comes from God himself, who created man "in his own image and likeness" precisely "as man and woman". This call flows from the Gospel and makes itself heard in the voice of young consciences, if they have preserved their simplicity and purity: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God".(63) Yes, through that love which is born in you-and wishes to become a part of your whole plan of life-you must see God who is love.(64)

And so I ask you not to break off your conversation with Christ in this extremely important phase of your youth; I ask you rather to commit yourselves even more. When Christ says "Follow me", his call can mean: "I call you to still another love"; but very often it means: "Follow me", follow me who am the Bridegroom of the Church who is my bride; come, you too become the bridegroom of your bride, you too become the bride of your spouse. Both of you become sharers in that mystery, that Sacrament, which the Letter to the Ephesians says is something great: great "in reference to Christ and the Church".(65)

Much depends on the fact that you, on this path too, should follow Christ; that you should not flee from him, when you are occupied with this matter which you rightly consider the great event of your heart, a matter that exists only in you and between you. I want you to believe and to be convinced that this great matter has its definitive dimension in God, who is love-in God, who in the absolute unity of his divinity is also a communion of persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I want you to believe and to be convinced that your human "great mystery" has its beginning in God who is the Creator, is rooted in Christ the Redeemer, who as the spouse "gave himself", and who teaches all husbands and wives how to "give themselves" in the full measure of each one's personal dignity. Christ teaches us married love.

To set out on the path of the married vocation means to learn married love day by day, year by year: love according to soul and body, love that "is patient, is kind, that does not insist on its own way... and does not rejoice at wrong": love that "rejoices in the right", love that "endures all things".(66)

It is precisely this love that you young people need if your married future is to "pass the test" of the whole of life. And precisely this test is part of the very essence of the vocation which, through marriage, you intend to include in the plan of your life.

And so I do not cease to pray to Christ and to the Mother of Fair Love for the love that is born in young hearts. Many times in my life it has been my task to accompany in a sense more closely this love of young people. Thanks to this experience I have come to understand just how essential the matter that we are dealing with here is, how important and how great it is. I think that to a large extent the future of humanity is decided along the paths of this love, initially youthful love, which you and she, you and he discover along the paths of your youth. This can be called a great adventure, but it is also a great task.

Today, the principles of Christian morality concerning marriage are in many circles being presented in a distorted way. Attempts are being made to impose on environments and even entire societies a model that calls itself "progressive" and "modern". It then goes unnoticed that this model transforms a human being and perhaps especially a woman from a subject into an object (an object of specific manipulation), and the whole great content of love is reduced to "pleasure", which, even though it involved both parties, would

still be selfish in its essence. Finally the child, who is the fruit and the fresh incarnation of the love between the two, becomes ever more "an annoying addition". The materialistic and consumeristic civilization is penetrating this whole wonderful complex of conjugal and paternal and maternal love, and stripping it of that profoundly human content which from the beginning was also permeated by a divine mark and reflection.

Dear young friends! Do not allow this treasure to be taken away from you! Do not inscribe in the plan of your life a deformed, impoverished and falsified content: love "rejoices in the truth". Seek out this truth where it is really to be found! If necessary, be resolved to go against the current of popular opinion and propaganda slogans! Do not be afraid of the love that places clear demands on people. These demands-as you find them in the constant teaching of the Church-are precisely capable of making your love a true love.

If anywhere, it is especially here that I wish to repeat the hope which I expressed at the beginning, namely, that you will be "always prepared to make a defence to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you!". The Church and humanity entrust to you the great reality of that love which is the basis of marriage, the family and the future. The Church and humanity firmly believe that you will bring about its rebirth; they firmly believe that you will make it beautiful: beautiful in a human and Christian way. In a human and Christian way great, mature and responsible.

### Inheritance

11. In the vast sphere in which the plan of life, drawn up in youth, comes into contact with "other people", we have touched upon the most sensitive point. Let us go on to consider that this central point, at which our personal "I" opens up to life "with others" and "for others" in the marriage covenant, finds in Sacred Scripture a very important passage: "Man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife".(67)

This word "leaves" deserves special attention. From its very beginning the history of humanity passes-and will do so until the end- through the family. A man enters the family through the birth which he owes to his parents, his father and mother, and at the right moment he leaves this first environment of life and love in order to pass to a new one. By "leaving father and mother", each one of you at the same time, in a certain sense, bears them within you; you assume the manifold inheritance that has its direct beginning and source in them and in their family. In this way too, when you leave, each one of you remains: the inheritance that you receive links you permanently with those who passed it on to you and to whom you owe so much. And the individual-he and she-will continue to pass on the same inheritance. Thus also the fourth commandment of the Decalogue is of such great importance: "Honour your father and your mother".(68)

It is a question here first of all of the heritage of being a human person, and then of being one in a more precisely defined personal and social situation. Here even the physical similarity to one's parents plays its part. Still more important is the whole heritage of culture, at the almost daily centre of which is language. Your parents have taught each one of you to speak the language which constitutes the essential expression of the social bond with other people. This bond is established by limits which are wider than the family itself or a given environment. These are the limits of at least a tribe and most often those of a people or a nation into which you were born.

In this way the family inheritance grows wider. Through your upbringing in your family you share in a specific culture; you also share in the history of your people or nation. The family bond means at the same time membership of a community wider than the family and a still further basis of personal identity. If the family is the first teacher of each one of you, at the same time-through the family-you are also taught by the tribe, people or nation with which you are linked through the unity of culture, language and history.

This inheritance likewise constitutes a call in the ethical sense. By receiving and inheriting faith and the values and elements that make up the culture of your society and the history of your nation, each one of you is spiritually endowed in your individual humanity. Here we come back to the parable of the talents, the talents which we receive from the Creator through our parents and families, and also through the national community to which we belong. In regard to this inheritance we cannot maintain a passive attitude, still less a defeatist one, as did the last of the servants described in the parable of the talents.(69) We must do everything we can to accept this spiritual inheritance, to confirm it, maintain it and increase it. This is an

important task for all societies, especially perhaps for those that find themselves at the beginning of their independent existence, or for those that must defend from the danger of destruction from outside or of decay from within the very existence and essential identity of the particular nation.

Writing to you young people, I try to have before my mind's eye the complex and separate situations of the tribes, peoples and nations of our world. Your youth, and the plan of life which during your young years each one of you works out, are from the very beginning part of the history of these different societies, and this happens not "from without" but pre-eminently "from within". It becomes for you a question of family awareness and consequently of national awareness: a question of the heart, a question of conscience. The concept of "homeland" develops immediately after the concept of "family", and in a certain sense one within the other. And as you gradually experience this social bond which is wider than that of the family, you also begin to share in responsibility for the common good of that larger family which is the earthly "homeland" of each one of you. The prominent figures of a nation's history, ancient or modern, also guide your youth and foster the development of that social love which is more often called "love of country".

#### Talents and tasks

12. This context of family and society which is your homeland gradually comes to include a theme closely connected with the parable of the talents. For little by little you recognize the "talent" or "talents" which each of you has, and you begin to use them in a creative way, you begin to increase them. And this happens through work.

What an enormous range of possible directions, capacities and interests exists in this field! I shall not attempt to list them here even by way of example, since there is a danger of leaving out more than I could take into consideration. I shall therefore pre-suppose all that variety and multiplicity of directions. It also shows the manifold wealth of discoveries which youth brings with it. Referring to the Gospel, we can say that youth is the time for discerning talents. It is also the time when one starts out on the many paths along which all human activity, work and creativity have developed and continue to do so.

I hope that all of you will discover yourselves along these paths. I hope that you will set out upon them with interest, diligence and enthusiasm. Work—all work—is linked to effort: "In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread",<sup>(70)</sup> and this experience of hard work is shared by each one of you from your earliest years. At the same time, however, work in a specific way forms man, and in a certain sense creates him. So it is always a question of effort which is creative.

This refers not only to study or mental and intellectual work in general but also to the ordinary kinds of physical work that seemingly have nothing "creative" about them.

The work which characterizes the period of youth is, above all, a preparation for the work of adulthood, and so is linked to the school. As I write these words to you young people, I am therefore thinking of all the schools all over the world to which your young lives are linked for a number of years, at higher and higher levels, according to your degree of intellectual development and your inclinations: from elementary schools to universities. I am also thinking of all the adults, my brothers and sisters, who are your teachers and instructors, the guides of your young minds and characters. How great is their task! What a special responsibility is theirs! But how great too is their merit!

Finally, I am thinking of those groups of young people, your peers, who—especially in certain societies and environments—are deprived of the opportunity of education, often even at the elementary level. This fact is a permanent challenge to all those responsible for education on a national and international scale, that this state of affairs be appropriately improved. For education is one of the fundamental benefits of human civilization. It is especially important for the young. Upon it also depends to a great extent the future of the whole of society.

However, when we discuss the question of education, study, learning and school, there emerges a question of fundamental importance for the human person, and in a special way for a young person. This is the question of truth. Truth is the light of the human intellect. If the intellect seeks, from youth onwards, to know reality in its different dimensions, it does so in order to possess the truth: in order to live the truth. Such is the structure of the human spirit. Hunger for truth is its fundamental aspiration and expression.

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Now Christ says: "You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free".(71) Of the words contained in the Gospel these are certainly among the most important. For they refer to man in his totality. They explain what the dignity and greatness proper to man are built upon from within, in the dimensions of the human spirit. The knowledge which frees man does not depend on education alone, even of university standard-an illiterate person can have it too; though education, the systematic knowledge of reality, should serve the dignity of the human person. It should therefore serve the truth.

The service of truth is also carried out in the work that you will be called upon to perform when you have completed the programme of your education. At school you have to acquire the programme of your education. At school you have to acquire the intellectual, technical and practical skills that will enable you to take your place usefully in the great world of human work. But while it is true that the school has to prepare you for work, including manual work, it is equally true that work itself is a school in which great and important values are learned: it has an eloquence of its own which makes a valid contribution to human culture.

However, in the relationship between education and work, a relationship characteristic of society today, there emerge very serious problems of a practical nature. I am referring in particular to the problem of unemployment, and more generally of the lack of jobs that in various ways is causing difficulties to young people all over the world. As you are well aware, this problem involves still other questions which from your school-days cast a shadow of uncertainty over your future. You ask yourselves: Does society need me? Will I too be able to find a type of work that will enable me to become independent? To bring up a family of my own in dignified living conditions, and, most important of all, in a home of my own? In short, is it really true that society is expecting my contribution?

The seriousness of these questions impels me once more to remind governments and all those responsible for the economy and development of nations that work is a human right; and it is therefore to be guaranteed by ensuring that it receives the most assiduous care and by centering economic policy on making sure that sufficient jobs are created for everyone, and especially for the young, who so often are the victims of unemployment today. We are all convinced that "work is a good thing for man-a good thing for his humanity- because through work man not only transforms nature, adapting it to his own needs, but he also achieves fulfillment as a human being and indeed, in a sense becomes 'more a human being' ". (72)

#### Self-education and related threats

13. What concerns the school as an institution and environment above all includes youth. But, I would say that the eloquence of Christ's words about truth quoted above still more concern young people themselves. For while there is no doubt that the family educates and that the school teaches and educates, at the same time both the action of the family and that of the school will remain incomplete (and could even be made useless) unless each one of you young people undertakes the work of your own education. Education in the family and at school can only provide you with a certain number of elements for the work of self-education.

And in this sphere Christ's words: "You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free", become an essential programme. Young people, one might say, have an inborn "sense of truth". And truth must be used for freedom: young people also have a spontaneous "desire for freedom". And what does it mean to be free? It means to know how to use one's freedom in truth-to be "truly" free. To be truly free does not at all mean doing everything that pleases me, or doing what I want to do. Freedom contains in itself the criterion of truth, the discipline of truth. To be truly free means to use one's own freedom for what is a true good. Continuing therefore: to be truly free means to be a person of upright conscience, to be responsible, to be a person "for others".

All this constitutes the very kernel of what we call education, and especially what we call self-education. Yes: self-education! For an interior structure of this kind, where "the truth makes us free",-cannot be built only "from outside". Each individual must build this structure "from within"-build it with effort, perseverance and patience (which is not always so easy for young people). And it is precisely this structure which is called self-education. The Lord Jesus also speaks of this when he emphasizes that only "with perseverance" can we "save our souls". (73) "To save our souls": this is the fruit of self- education.

Contained in all this is a new way of looking at youth. Here we are no longer speaking of a simple plan of life that has to be accomplished in the future. It must be accomplished already in the period of youth, if through work, education, and especially through self-education, we create life itself, building the foundation of the successive development of our personality. In this sense, we can say that youth is "the sculptress that shapes the whole of life", and the form that youth gives to the concrete humanity of each of you is consolidated in the whole of life.

If this has an important positive significance, unfortunately it can also have an important negative one. You cannot close your eyes to the threats that lie in wait for you during the period of youth. These too can leave their mark on your whole life.

I am alluding for example to their temptation to bitter criticism, which would like to challenge and review everything; or the temptation to skepticism regarding traditional values, which can easily degenerate into a sort of extreme cynicism when it is a matter of dealing with problems connected with one's work, career or even marriage. Again, how can one pass over in silence the temptations caused by the growth, especially in the more prosperous countries, of a type of entertainment business that distracts people from a serious commitment in life and encourages passivity, selfishness and self-isolation? Dear young people, you are under threat from the bad use of advertising techniques, which plays upon the natural tendency to avoid effort and promises the immediate satisfaction of every desire, while the consumerism that goes with it suggests that man should seek self-fulfillment especially in the enjoyment of material goods. How many young people, succumbing to the fascination of deceptive mirages, give themselves up to the uncontrolled power of the instincts, or venture on to paths which seem full of promise but which in reality are lacking in genuinely human prospects! I feel the need to repeat what I wrote in the Message which I dedicated precisely to you for the World Day of Peace: "Some of you may be tempted to take flight from responsibility: in the fantasy worlds of alcohol and drugs, in shortlived sexual relationships without commitment to marriage and family, in indifference, in cynicism and even in violence. Put yourselves on guard against the fraud of a world that wants to exploit or misdirect your energetic and powerful search for happiness and meaning".(74)

I write all this to you in order to express my great concern for you. For if you must "always be prepared to make a defence to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you", then everything that works against this hope must cause concern. And as for all those who try to destroy your youth by holding out various temptations and illusions, I must remind them of the words of Christ with which he speaks about scandal and those who cause it: "Woe to him by whom temptations to sin come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea, than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin".(75)

Grave words! Especially grave in the mouth of him who came to reveal love. But whoever carefully reads these words of the Gospel must feel how deep is the antithesis between good and evil, between virtue and sin. He must even more clearly perceive what importance the youth of each one of you has in the eyes of Christ. It was precisely his love for young people that caused him to utter these grave and severe words. They contain as it were a distant echo of Christ's conversation with the young man in the Gospel, which this Letter constantly refers to.

Youth as "growth"

14. Allow me to conclude this part of my reflections by recalling the words with which the Gospel speaks about the youthful years of Jesus of Nazareth. These words are brief, even though they cover the period of thirty years which he spent in the family home, with Mary and with Joseph the carpenter. The Evangelist Luke writes: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man".(76)

Youth, then, is "growth". In the light of all that has been said so far on this theme, this Gospel passage strikes one as particularly synthetical and evocative. Growth "in stature" refers to an individual's natural relationship with time: this growth is as it were an "upward" stage in the course of a person's life. It is the time of psychophysical development: the growth of all the energies through which normal human individuality is built up. But this process has to be accompanied by "growth" in wisdom and grace.

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For all of you, dear young friends, I wish just such "growth". One can say that youth is youth precisely through that growth. In this way youth acquires its own unrepeatable character. In this way it is given to each one of you in your personal and at the same time community experience as a special value. In a similar way, it also becomes consolidated in the experience of adults whose youth is already behind them and who are moving from the "upward" stage towards the "downward" stage, making up the overall pattern of life.

Youth should be a process of "growth" bringing with it the gradual accumulation of all that is true, good and beautiful, even when this growth is linked "from outside" to suffering, the loss of loved ones, and the whole experience of evil that constantly makes itself felt in the world in which we live.

Youth should be "growth". For this purpose, contact with the visible world, with nature, is of immense importance. In one's youth this relationship to the visible world is enriching in a way that differs from knowledge of the world "obtained from books". It enriches us in a direct way. One could say that by being in contact with nature we absorb into our own human existence the very mystery of creation which reveals itself to us through the untold wealth and variety of visible beings, and which at the same time is always beckoning us towards what is hidden and invisible. Wisdom-both from the inspired books (77) as also from the testimony of many brilliant minds-seems in different ways to reveal "the transparency of the world". It is good for people to read this wonderful book-the "book of nature", which lies open for each one of us. What the youthful mind and heart read in this book seems to be in perfect harmony with the exhortation to wisdom: "Acquire wisdom, acquire insight... Do not forsake her and she will keep you; love her and she will guard you".(78)

Man today, especially in the context of highly developed technical and industrial civilization, has become the explorer of nature on a grand scale, often treating it in a utilitarian way, thus destroying many of its treasures and attractions and polluting the natural environment of earthly existence. But nature is also given to us to be admired and contemplated, like a great mirror of the world. It reflects the Creator's covenant with his creature, the centre of which has been, from the beginning, in man, directly created "in the image" of the Creator.

And so my hope for you young people is that your "growth in stature and in wisdom" will come about through contact with nature. Make time for this! Do not miss it! Accept too the fatigue and effort that this contact sometimes involves, especially when we wish to attain particularly challenging goals. Such fatigue is creative, and also constitutes the element of healthy relaxation which is as necessary as study and work.

This fatigue and effort have their own place in the Bible, especially in Saint Paul, who compares the whole Christian life to a race in the sports stadium.(79)

Each one of you needs this fatigue and effort, which not only tempers the body but also enables the whole person to experience the joy of selfmastery and victory over obstacles and barriers. This is certainly one of the elements of "growth" that characterize youth.

I likewise hope that this "growth" will come about through contact with the achievements of humanity, and still more through contact with living people. How great is their richness and variety! Youth seems particularly sensitive to the truth, goodness and beauty contained in the works of humanity. Through contact with people on the level of so many different cultures, of so many arts and sciences, we learn the truth about man (so evocatively expressed also in Psalm 8), the truth which can build up and enrich the humanity of each one of us.

In a special way, however, we study the human person through contact with others. Being young should enable you to "increase in wisdom" through this contact. For youth is the time for new contacts, new companionships and friendships, in a circle wider than the family alone. There unfolds before us the vast field of experience, which is important not only in regard to knowledge but also in relation to education and ethics. This whole youthful experience will be useful to the extent that it gives you the ability to make critical judgments and above all the capacity of discernment in all things human. Your youthful experience will be blessed, you will gradually learn from it that essential truth concerning man-concerning every human being and concerning oneself-the truth that is summed up thus in the famous passage of the Pastoral

Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*: "Man, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself".(80)

In this way therefore we learn to know other human beings, in order to become more fully human through our capacity for "self- giving": for becoming men and women "for others" . This truth about man-this anthropology-has its incomparable culmination in Jesus of Nazareth. Hence the great importance of his young years, when she increased in wisdom... and in favour before God and man".

My wish for you too is a similar "growth" through contact with God. For this purpose, contact with nature and with other people can help indirectly, but the special and direct means is prayer. Pray and learn to pray! Open your hearts and your consciences to the one who knows you better than you know yourselves. Talk to him! Deepen your knowledge of the word of the Living God by reading and meditating on the Scriptures.

These are the methods and means for coming close to God and making contact with him. Remember that it is a question of a two- way relationship. God responds also with the most "free gift of self", a gift which in biblical language is called "grace". Strive to live in the grace of God!

So much for the theme of "growth", which I write about in order to indicate only its main aspects, each of which could be discussed at much greater length. I hope that this is happening in youth circles and groups, in movements and organizations, which are becoming so numerous in the various countries and continents, each one being guided by its own method of spiritual work and apostolate. The intention of these bodies, with the assistance of the Pastors of the Church, is to show young people the path of that "growth" which in a certain sense constitutes the evangelical definition of youth.

The great challenge of the future

15. The Church looks to the young; or rather, the Church in a special way sees herself in the young -in you as a group and in each of you as individuals. This is how it has been since the beginning, since apostolic times. The words of Saint John in his First Letter offer a particular testimony of this: "I am writing to you, young people, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, children, because you know the Father... I write to you, young people, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you".(81)

The words of the Apostle can be linked with Christ's conversation with the young man in the Gospel, and they re-echo loud and clear from generation to generation.

In our own generation, at the close of the second millennium after Christ, the Church continues to see herself in the young. And how does the Church see herself? Let the teaching of the Second Vatican Council be a particular testimony of this. The Church sees herself as a sacrament, or sign and means of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind".(82) And so she sees herself in relationship to the whole great human family which is in constant growth. She sees herself in worldwide dimensions. She sees herself on the paths of ecumenism, on the paths towards the unity of all Christians, for which Christ himself prayed and which is of unquestionable urgency in our time. She also sees herself in dialogue with the followers of the non-Christian religions, and with all people of good will. This dialogue is a dialogue of salvation, which should also serve the cause of peace in the world and justice among people.

You young people are the hope of the Church that sees herself and her mission in the world precisely in this way. She speaks to you about this mission. An expression of this was the Message of 1 January 1985, for the celebration of the World Day of Peace. That Message was addressed to you, on the basis of the belief that "the path of peace is at the same time the path of the young" (Peace and youth go forward together). This belief is an appeal and at the same time a commitment: once again it is a question of being always "prepared to make a defence to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you" the hope that is linked with you. As you can see, this hope concerns fundamental and at the same time universal matters.

All of you live every day among those dear to you. But this circle gradually expands. An ever increasing number of people come to share in your life, and you yourselves discern the outlines of a communion that unites you with them. This is almost always a community that in some way is made up of different elements. It is differentiated in the way that the Second Vatican Council perceived and declared in its

Dogmatic Constitution on the Church and in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. In some cases your young years are being lived in environments that are uniform from the point of view of religious confession, in others where there are differences of religion, or even on the border-line between faith and unbelief, the latter being in the form either of agnosticism or of atheism in its various expressions.

It seems nevertheless that when faced by certain questions these many different communities of young people feel, think and react in a very similar way. For example, it seems that they are all united by a common attitude towards the fact that hundreds of thousands of people are living in extreme poverty and are even dying of hunger, while at the same time vast sums are being spent on the production of nuclear weapons, the stocks of which at this very moment are capable of bringing about humanity's self-destruction. There are other similar tensions and threats, on a scale never before known in the history of humanity. This is dealt with in the already mentioned Message for the New Year, so I will not go into the problems again here. We are all aware that the horizon of the lives of the billions of people who make up the human family at the close of the second millennium after Christ seems to portend the possibility of calamities and catastrophes on a truly apocalyptic scale.

In this situation you young people can rightly ask the preceding generations: How have we come to this point? Why have we reached such a degree of peril for humanity all over the world? What are the causes of the injustice that affronts our eyes? Why are so many dying of hunger? Why so many millions of refugees at the different borders? Why so many cases in which fundamental human rights are trampled on? So many prisons and concentration camps, so much systematic violence and the murder of innocent people, so much abuse of men and women, so much torture and torment inflicted on human bodies and human consciences? And in the midst of all this there is also the fact of young men who have on their consciences so many innocent victims, because it has been instilled into them that only in this way-through organized terrorism-can the world be made a better place. So again you ask: Why?

You young people can ask all these questions, indeed you must! For this is the world you are living in today, and in which you will have to live tomorrow, when the older generation has passed on. So you rightly ask: Why does humanity's great progress in science and technology-which cannot be compared with any preceding period of history-why does man's progress in mastering the material world turn against humanity itself in so many ways? So you rightly ask, though also with a sense of inner foreboding: Is this state of affairs irreversible? Can it be changed? Shall we succeed in changing it?

You rightly ask this. Yes, this is the fundamental question facing your generation.

This is how your conversation with Christ goes on, the conversation begun one day in the Gospel. That young man asked: "What must I do to have eternal life?". And you put the same question in the style of the times in which it is your turn to be young: "What must we do to ensure that life-the flourishing life of the human family-will not be turned into the graveyard of nuclear death? What must we do to avoid being dominated by the sin of universal injustice? The sin of holding people in contempt and scorning their dignity, notwithstanding so many declarations confirming all human rights? What must we do? And also: Will we be able to do it.?"

Christ answers as he answered the young people of the first generation of the Church through the words of the Apostle: "I am writing to you, young people, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, children, because you know the Father... I write to you, young people, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you".(83) The words of the Apostle, going back almost two thousand years, are also an answer for today. They use the simple and strong language of faith that bears within itself victory over the evil in the world: "And this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith".(84) These words have the strength of the experience of the Cross and Resurrection of Christ, the experience of the Apostles and of the generations of Christians that followed them. In this experience the whole of the Gospel is confirmed. These words also confirm the truth contained in Christ's conversation with the young man.

As we approach the end of this Letter, let us therefore pause for a moment to consider these words of the Apostle, which are both a confirmation and a challenge for you. They are also an answer.

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In you, in your young hearts, there is a strong desire for genuine brotherhood between all people, without divisions, conflicts or discrimination. Yes! You young people are bearers of the yearning for brotherhood and widespread solidarity-and certainly you do not want conflict between human beings, one against the other, in any form. Does not this yearning for brotherhood (each one is neighbor to the other! all are brothers and sisters of one another! ) witness to the fact that, as the Apostle writes, "you have known the Father"? Because there can only be brothers and sisters where there is a father. And only where the Father is are people brothers and sisters.

So if you cherish a desire for brotherhood, this means that "the word of God abides in you". There abides in you that teaching which Christ brought, and which is rightly called the "Good News". And on your lips, or at least in the depths of your hearts, there abides the prayer of the Lord which begins with the words "Our Father". The prayer which reveals the Father and at the same time confirms that people are brothers and sisters of one another -and whose whole essence is contrary to all programmes based on the principle of conflict between human beings in any form. The "Our Father" leads human hearts away from enmity, hatred, violence, terrorism, discrimination-from the situations in which human dignity and human rights are trampled upon.

The Apostle writes that you young people are strong in the strength of divine doctrine: the doctrine contained in Christ's Gospel and summed up in the "Our Father". Yes! You are strong in this divine teaching, you are strong in this prayer. You are strong because it instills into you love, good will, respect for people, for their life, their dignity, their conscience, their beliefs and their rights. If "you know the Father", you are strong with the power of human brotherhood.

You are also strong for the struggle: not for the struggle of one against another in the name of some ideology or practice separated from the very roots of the Gospel, but strong for the struggle against evil, against the real evil: against everything that offends God, against every injustice and exploitation, against every falsehood and deceit, against everything that insults and humiliates, against everything that profanes human society and human relationships, against every crime against life: against every sin.

The Apostle writes: "You have overcome the evil one"! And so it is. It is necessary to keep going back to the origin of evil and of sin in the history of mankind and the universe, just as Christ went back to these same roots in the Paschal Mystery of his Cross and Resurrection. There is no need to be afraid to call the first agent of evil by his name: the Evil One. The strategy which he used and continues to use is that of not revealing himself, so that the evil implanted by him from the beginning may receive its development from man himself, from systems and from relationships between individuals, from classes and nations-so as also to become ever more a "structural" sin, ever less identifiable as "personal" sin. In other words, so that man may feel in a certain sense "freed" from sin but at the same time be ever more deeply immersed in it.

The Apostle says: "Young people, you are strong": all that is needed is that "the word of God abide in you". Then you are strong: thus you will succeed in getting at the hidden workings of evil, its sources, and thus you will gradually succeed in changing the world, transforming it, making it more human, more fraternal-and at the same time more of God. For it is impossible to detach the world from God or set it up in opposition to God in the human heart. Nor is it possible to detach man from God and set him up in opposition to God. For this would be against the nature of man -against the intrinsic truth that constitutes the whole of reality! Truly the human heart is restless until it rests in God.(85) These words of the great Augustine never lose their validity.

Final message

16. So, my young friends, I hand you this Letter which continues the Gospel conversation of Christ with the young man-and flows from the testimony of the Apostles and of the first generations of Christians. I give you this Letter in International Youth Year, as we approach the end of the second Christian millennium. I entrust it to you in the twentieth year since the close of the Second Vatican Council, which called young people "the hope of the Church" ,(86) and which addressed to the young people of that time-as also to those of today and of all time-a "closing Message" in which the Church is described as the real youth of the world, as the one who "possesses what constitutes strength and the charm of youth, that is to say, the ability to rejoice with what is beginning, to give oneself unreservedly, to renew oneself and to set out again for new conquests".(87) This I do on Palm Sunday, the day on which I am meeting many of you, pilgrims in

Saint Peter's Square, here in Rome. Precisely on this day the Bishop of Rome prays together with you for all the young people of the world, for each and every one. We are praying in the community of the Church, so that-against the background of the difficult times in which we live-you "may always be prepared to make a defence to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you". Yes, precisely you, because on you depends the future, on you depends also the end of this millennium and the beginning of the next. So do not be passive; take up your responsibilities-in all the fields open to you in our world! For this same intention the Bishops and priests in the different places will pray together with you.

And as we thus pray, in the great community of the young people of the universal Church and of all the Churches, we have before our eyes the image of Mary, who accompanies Christ at the beginning of his mission among men. This is the Mary of Cana of Galilee, who intercedes for the young people, for the newly-married couple when at the marriage feast the wine for the guests runs out. Then Christ's Mother says these words to those serving at the feast: "Do whatever he tells you".(88) He, the Christ.

I repeat these words of the Mother of God and I address them to you, to each one of you young people: "Do whatever Christ tells you". And I bless you in the name of the Most Holy Trinity. Amen.

Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, on 31 March, Palm Sunday and the Sunday of the Lord's Passion, in the year 1985, the seventh of my Pontificate.

JOHN PAUL II

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## NOTES

1. 1 Pet 3:15.
2. Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*, 14: AAS 71 (1979), 284 f.
3. Cf. Rom 8:19, 21; Eph 4:4; Phil 3:10f.; Tit 3:7; Heb 7:19; 1 Pet 1:13.
4. 1 Pet 3:15.
5. Cf. Mk 10:17-22; Mt 19:16-22; Lk 18:18-23.
6. Mk 10: 17-19.
7. Mk 10:20-21.
8. Mk 10:22.
9. Cf. Lk 8:49-56.
10. Cf. Lk 7:11-17.
11. Rev 21:6.
12. Jn 3:16.
13. 1 Jn 4:8,16.
14. Cf. 2 Thess 2:7.
15. Jn 14:9.
16. Cf. Heb 13:8.
17. Cf. Gen 1:26.
18. Jn 3:19; cf. 1:9.
19. Jn 1:5.
20. Rom 6:9.
21. Lk 2:34.
22. Jn 11:25.
23. Jn 3:16.
24. 1 Cor 7:31.
25. Heb 9:27.
26. *Ibidem*.
27. Jn 11:25-26.
28. Cf. Ex 34:1; Dt 9:10; 2 Cor 3:3.
29. Cf. Dt 4:5-9.
30. Mk 10:20.
31. Cf. Mt 5-7.
32. Cf. Mt 22:37-40; Mk 12:29-31; Lk 10:27.
33. Rom 2:14.
34. Rom 2:15.
35. *Ibidem*.
36. Mk 10:19.
37. Heb 9:27.
38. Col 3:14.
39. Cf. 1 Cor 13:13.
40. Cf. Mt 22:38.
41. "The moral law", Confucius says, "is not distant from us... The wise man does not make many mistakes regarding the moral law. He has as his principle: do not do to others what you would not wish done to you" (Chung Yung: *Equilibrium and Norm*, 13). A Japanese master of ancient times (Dengyo Daishi, also called Saicho, who lived 767-822 A.D.) urges people to be "forgetful of self, doers of good to others: this represents the summit of friendship and compassion" (cf. W.T. De Bary, *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, New York 1958, Vol I, p. 127). Nor can one fail to

- mention Mahatma Gandhi, who taught the "power of truth" (satyagraha), which conquers without violence by the dynamism intrinsic to just action.
42. Cf. Rom 2:15.
  43. Cf. Jn 1:9; Second Vatican Council, Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions *Nostra Aetate*, 2.
  44. Gen 1:31.
  45. Cf. Jn 2:25.
  46. Cf. Lk 22:61.
  47. Cf. Eph 1:4.
  48. Mt. 19:20.
  49. 1 Cor 7:31.
  50. Col 3:1.
  51. Rom 5:5.
  52. Cf. Mt 5:3-12.
  53. Mt 19:21.
  54. Cf. Mk 10:21; Jn 1:43; 21:29.
  55. Cf. Mt 19:12.
  56. Cf. e.g. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Redemptionis Donum*: AAS 76 (1984), 513-546.
  57. Mt. 9:3,7.
  58. Mt. 9:37f.
  59. Cf. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, 39-42.
  60. Cf. Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 43-44.
  61. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, 1.
  62. Jn 4:10.
  63. Mt 5:8.
  64. Cf. 1 Jn 4:8, 16.
  65. Cf. Eph 5:32.
  66. Cf. 1 Cor 13:4, 5, 6, 7.
  67. Gen 2:24; cf. Mt. 19:5.
  68. Ex 20:12; Dt 5:16; Mt 15:4.
  69. Cf. Mt 25:14-30; Lk 19:12-26.
  70. Gen 3:19.
  71. Jn 8:32.
  72. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Laborem Exercens*, 9: AAS 73 (1981), 599f.
  73. Cf. Lk 21:19.
  74. Message for the World Day of Peace 1985, No. 3: AAS 77 (1985), 163.
  75. Lk 17:1-2.
  76. Lk 2:52.
  77. Cf. e.g. Ps 104[103]; Ps 19[18]; Ws 13:1-9; 7:15-20.
  78. Pr 4:5-7.
  79. Cf. 1 Cor 9:24-27.
  80. Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 24.
  81. 1 Jn 2:13-14.
  82. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, 1.
  83. 1 Jn 2:13-14.
  84. 1 Jn 5:4.
  85. Cf. Saint Augustine, *Confessions* I, 1: CSEL 33, p. 1.
  86. Second Vatican Council, Declaration on Christian Education *Gravissimum Educationis*, 2.
  87. Cf. AAS 58 (1966), 18.
  88. Jn 2:5.

Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, on 31 March, Palm Sunday and the Sunday of the Lord's Passion, in the year 1985, the seventh of my Pontificate.

# 1986

**November 30, 1986**

MESSAGGIO

DI GIOVANNI PAOLO II

PER LA II GIORNATA MONDIALE DELLA GIOVENTU'

«Noi abbiamo riconosciuto e creduto all'amore che Dio ha per noi...» (1Gv 4,16).

Cari giovani, cari amici.

1. L'8 giugno scorso, ho avuto la grande gioia di annunciare che la prossima Giornata mondiale della gioventù si terrà a Buenos Aires la domenica delle Palme 1987. Con l'aiuto di Dio, starò allora compiendo la mia visita apostolica alle nazioni del cono sud dell'America Latina: Uruguay, Cile e Argentina.



A Buenos Aires avrò la grande gioia di incontrarmi non solo con la gioventù argentina, ma anche con molti giovani provenienti da tutta l'area latino-americana e da altri Paesi del mondo. In quell'incontro tanto atteso ci sentiremo tutti in comunione di preghiera, di amicizia e di fraternità, di responsabilità e di impegno con tutti gli altri giovani che, riuniti attorno ai loro pastori, celebreranno questa Giornata nelle Chiese locali di tutto il mondo; ci sentiremo altresì uniti a tutti coloro che cercano Dio con cuore sincero e vogliono impiegare le loro energie giovanili e costruire una nuova società più giusta e fraterna.

Non è certo privo di significato il fatto che, questa volta, la Giornata abbia come epicentro la terra latinoamericana, popolata in maggioranza da giovani, animatori e futuri protagonisti del cosiddetto «continente della speranza». La Chiesa latinoamericana ha espresso a Puebla de los Angeles (Messico) la sua «opzione preferenziale per i giovani» e ora si dispone a una «nuova evangelizzazione» per ritrovare le sue radici e ringiovanire la tradizione e la cultura cristiana delle sue popolazioni alla soglia del «mezzo millennio» della prima evangelizzazione. Ma il nostro sguardo spazia sui quattro punti cardinali e la nostra parola vuole convocare tutti i giovani e le giovani del Nord e del Sud, dell'Est e dell'Ovest, gli uomini e le donne del 2000 che la Chiesa riconosce e accoglie con speranza.

2. Il tema e il contenuto di questa Giornata mondiale pongono dinanzi ai nostri occhi la testimonianza dell'apostolo san Giovanni quando esclama: «Noi abbiamo riconosciuto e creduto all'amore che Dio ha per noi».

A questo proposito desidero ricordarvi un pensiero espresso nella mia prima enciclica: «L'uomo non può vivere senza amore. Egli rimane per se stesso un essere incomprendibile, la sua vita è priva di senso, se non gli viene rivelato l'amore, se non s'incontra con l'amore, se non lo sperimenta e non lo fa proprio, se non vi partecipa vivamente» («Redemptor Hominis», 10). E quanto più valida è questa realtà per i giovani, in una fase di speciale responsabilità e speranza, di crescita della persona, di precisazione dei grandi significati, ideali e progetti di vita, di ansia di verità come di ricerca di autentica felicità! E' il momento in cui più si avverte il bisogno di sentirsi riconosciuti, sostenuti, ascoltati e amati. Voi sapete bene, dal profondo dei vostri cuori, quanto siano effimere le soddisfazioni offerte da un edonismo superficiale e come lascino un vuoto nell'anima; quanto sia illusorio rinchiudersi nella corazza del proprio egoismo; come l'indifferenza e lo scetticismo contraddicano i sublimi aneliti di amore senza frontiere; come le tentazioni della violenza e delle ideologie negatrici di Dio portino solo a vicoli ciechi.

Posto che l'uomo senza amore non può vivere né essere compreso, vi invito tutti a crescere in umanità, a porre come priorità assoluta i valori dello spirito, a trasformarvi in «uomini nuovi», riconoscendo e accettando sempre più la presenza di Dio nella vostra vita, la presenza di un Dio che è Amore; un Padre che ama ciascuno di noi da tutta l'eternità, che ci ha creato per amore e tanto ci ha amato da dare suo Figlio Unigenito perché fossero perdonati i nostri peccati, per riconciliarci con lui, per vivere con lui una comunione di amore che non avrà mai fine. La Giornata mondiale della gioventù deve quindi disporci tutti ad accogliere il dono dell'amore di Dio che ci plasma e ci salva. Il mondo attende con ansia la nostra testimonianza di amore, una testimonianza originata da una profonda convinzione personale e da un sincero atto di amore e di fede in Cristo risorto. Questo significa conoscere l'amore e crescere in esso.

3. Le nostre celebrazioni avranno anche un'esplicita dimensione comunitaria, esigenza ineludibile dell'amore di Dio e della comunione di coloro che si sentono figli del medesimo Padre, fratelli in Gesù Cristo e uniti dalla forza dello Spirito. Poiché voi siete incorporati alla grande famiglia dei redenti e siete membra vive della Chiesa, sperimenterete in questa Giornata l'entusiasmo e la gioia dell'amore di Dio che vi chiama all'unità e alla solidarietà. Questo appello non esclude nessuno; al contrario non conosce frontiere, ma abbraccia tutti i giovani senza distinzioni, rinforzando e rinnovando i vincoli che li uniscono tra loro. In quest'occasione dovranno essere particolarmente vivi e operanti i legami con i giovani che soffrono le conseguenze della disoccupazione, che vivono in povertà o in solitudine, che si sentono emarginati o che portano la pesante croce della malattia. Che il messaggio di amicizia arrivi anche a quanti non accettano la fede religiosa. La carità non transige con l'errore, però muove sempre incontro a tutti per indicare la via della conversione. Che belle e luminose parole ci rivolge al riguardo san Paolo nell'inno alla carità! (cfr. 1Cor 13). Siano esse per voi ideale di vita e preciso impegno nel presente come nel futuro!

L'amore di Dio che lo Spirito Santo ha posto nei nostri cuori (cfr. Rm 5,5) deve renderci più che mai sensibili alle impellenti minacce della fame e della guerra, alle scandalose disparità tra i pochi ricchi e i troppo poveri, agli attentati ai diritti dell'uomo nonché alle sue legittime libertà, compresa la libertà religiosa,

alle manipolazioni, presenti e potenziali, della sua dignità. Ho sentito vive e forti la vicinanza e la preghiera dei giovani in occasione della Giornata mondiale di preghiera per la pace, svoltasi il 27 ottobre scorso ad Assisi, e alla quale hanno partecipato rappresentanti delle confessioni cristiane e delle religioni del mondo.

E' più che mai necessario che gli enormi progressi scientifici e tecnologici della nostra epoca siano orientati, con sapienza etica, al bene di tutto l'uomo e di tutti gli uomini. La gravità, l'urgenza e la complessità dei problemi e delle sfide attuali richiedono dalle nuove generazioni capacità e competenza nei campi più diversi; tuttavia, al di là degli interessi o delle visioni parziali, occorre dare primazia al bene integrale dell'uomo, creato a immagine di Dio e chiamato a un destino eterno. In Cristo ci sono stati pienamente rivelati l'amore di Dio e la sublime dignità dell'uomo. Che Gesù sia la «pietra angolare» della vostra vita e della nuova civiltà che dovrete costruire in solidarietà generosa e aperta. Non può esservi un'autentica crescita umana nella pace e nella giustizia, nella verità e nella libertà, se Cristo non si rende presente con la sua forza salvifica.

La costruzione di una civiltà dell'amore richiede tempre forti e perseveranti, disposte al sacrificio e desiderose di aprire nuove strade alla convivenza sociale, superando divisioni e opposti materialismi. E' questa una precisa responsabilità dei giovani d'oggi che saranno gli uomini e le donne di domani, agli albori del terzo millennio cristiano.

4. Nell'attesa gioiosa del nostro incontro, vi invito tutti a una profonda e meditata preparazione spirituale che accresca il dinamismo ecclesiale della Giornata. Mettetevi in cammino! Che il vostro itinerario sia scandito dalla preghiera, dallo studio, dal dialogo, dal desiderio di conversione e di miglioramento. Camminate uniti partendo dalle vostre parrocchie e comunità cristiane, dalle vostre associazioni e movimenti apostolici. Sia il vostro un atteggiamento di accoglienza, di attesa, in sintonia con il periodo dell'Avvento che ora iniziamo. La liturgia di questa prima domenica ci ricorda, con le parole di san Paolo «il momento in cui viviamo» e ci esorta a «gettar via le opere delle tenebre» per rivestirci «invece del Signore Gesù Cristo» (cfr. Rm 13,11-14).

A tutti i giovani e le giovani del mondo invio il mio affettuoso e cordiale saluto. In particolare ai giovani argentini. Ho seguito con grande interesse i vostri pellegrinaggi annuali al Santuario di Nostra Signora di Luján e l'Incontro nazionale dei giovani tenuto l'anno passato a Córdoba, come pure «l'opzione gioventù» sulla quale si è concentrata per anni la pastorale generale dell'episcopato argentino. Fin dalla mia prima visita al vostro paese, nel 1982, così carica di dolore e di speranza, conosco il vostro impegno per la costruzione della pace nella giustizia e nella verità. Di conseguenza so che collaborerete con entusiasmo alla preparazione della Giornata di Buenos Aires, che sarete presenti a quell'incontro con il Papa e che saprete accogliere con ospitalità generosa e con amicizia e disponibilità i giovani di altri paesi che vorranno partecipare a questa festa di profondo impegno con Cristo, con la Chiesa, con la nuova civiltà della verità e dell'amore.

Invito tutti i giovani e le giovani del mondo a celebrare con particolare intensità e speranza la Giornata mondiale della Gioventù, la prossima domenica delle Palme 1987. Raccomando la preparazione e i frutti della Giornata a Maria, la giovane Vergine di Nazaret, l'umile ancella del Signore, che ha creduto nell'amore del Padre e ci ha dato Cristo «nostra pace» (Ef 2,14).

Cari giovani, cari amici, siate testimoni dell'amore di Dio, seminatori di speranza e costruttori di pace. Nel nome del Signore vi benedico con tutto il mio affetto.

30 novembre 1986

# 1987

May 12, 1987

2ND WORLD YOUTH DAY – BUENOS AIRES

Pope John Paul II: Be embraced by the Paschal Mystery

Homily of the Palm Sunday Liturgy, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 12 May 1987

"We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us" (1 Jn 4:16).

1. "Hosanna to the Son of David" (Mt 21:9).

Today the Church throughout the world repeats these words with which the crowd, gathered in Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover, acclaimed Jesus of Nazareth. "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" (Mt 21:9). Jesus, in the company of his disciples, entered the holy city, mounted on a mule. On that occasion also, as the evangelist underlines, the words spoken by the Prophet were fulfilled: "Tell the daughter of Zion: Your king comes to you without display astride an ass, astride a colt, the foal of a beast of burden." (Mt 21:5). The Church calls this day Palm Sunday, in remembrance of the palms strewn by the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the pilgrims as Jesus passed by, acclaimed enthusiastically by the crowd. The liturgical canticles of this Sunday remind us that young people had a special part in that enthusiasm: they are the "pueri Hebraeorum", the "Hebrew children" who appear in those songs as the voices of popular acclamation for the Son of David. It is as if the young people present at Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem wanted to accompany him always in a special way every time the Church celebrates the feast which belongs so much to you.

World Day of Youth

2. In the Holy Year of the Redemption, 1983-1984, great numbers, of young people from different parts of the world came on pilgrimage to Rome on Palm Sunday to celebrate the Jubilee with me. It was a wonderful and unforgettable day which we were able to recall the following year on the occasion of the International Youth Year. Since then Palm Sunday has been proclaimed Youth Day for the Church throughout the world. This year we are celebrating it here together, in Buenos Aires. Together with you, the youth of Argentina, there are young people who have come from various parts of America and the rest of the world; there is also a group from Rome, the Pope's diocese, along with different associations and international movements.

I affectionately greet all of you who are part of the great youth community in every part of the world. At the same time I wish to greet the pastors of the Church who are present here: Cardinal Juan Carlos Aramburu, the Archbishop of Buenos Aires; Cardinal Raul Francisco Primatesta, the Archbishop of Cordoba and President of the Conference of Argentinian Bishops; Cardinal Eduardo Francisco Pironio, President of the Pontifical Commission for the Laity, the organization which is responsible for preparing these world youth days. I greet especially the bishops who have come from near and far to be with the young people of their dioceses and to celebrate this day of special significance for the Church with the Pope. I also greet the priests, religious and all those who have come along with the young people on this pilgrimage. Thank you all for being here.

In the capital of the Republic of Argentina, we are united in spirit with St Peter's Basilica in Rome, the centre of the universal Church, where it was the Lord's wish that this youth celebration should be born. We feel equally united with all those places in the world where this annual feast is celebrated, in unity with the pastors, whether it be on Palm Sunday or on some other day of the year to suit local conditions and circumstances.

3. In joining Palm Sunday and Youth Day, highlighting the presence of young people in the joyful Hosanna which greeted Christ on his entry to the Holy City, the Church is thinking not only of the enthusiasm of youth at all times; she is thinking most of all of the significance which that entry had in the life of Christ, and hence in the life of each person, of each young person.

Yes, today's Liturgy reminds us that Jesus' solemn entry into Jerusalem was the prelude or introduction to the events of Holy Week. Those who on seeing Jesus asked "who is this?", will only find the full answer by following his steps through each of the decisive days of his death and resurrection. You too, young people, will reach a full understanding of the meaning of your lives, your vocation, by looking at Christ in his death and resurrection. To the natural attraction which Christ awakens in your hearts and which the young people in Jerusalem expressed with the enthusiasm of their Hosanna, add a peaceful and attentive consideration of the events of Holy Week.

Today we listened to the narration of those events as given to us in St Matthew's Gospel. Even though these words are not new they still arouse deep feelings in us. When in the text we see the figure of the Son of man emerge, subject to interrogation and torture, the words of the Prophet in today's liturgy, which were said many centuries before they were fulfilled, take on a new reality and eloquence.

Isaiah wrote of the future Messiah: "I gave my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who plucked my beard. My face I did not shield from buffets and spitting" (Is 50:6).

When we compare his words to the tragic events that took place between Thursday night and Friday morning, the similarity is astonishing; the prophet writes as if he had been a witness of those events.

With the same precision the Psalm in today's liturgy foretells the sufferings of Christ:

"All who see me scoff at me,  
they mock me with parted lips,  
they wag their heads;  
He relied on the Lord; let him deliver him,  
let him rescue him, if he loves him" (Ps 21 [22]:8-9).

These are words which the Gospel text will confirm, even almost to the smallest detail, in recounting the crucifixion of Jesus on Golgotha. Then too the words of the Psalmist describing Christ's wounds will be fulfilled: "They have pierced my hands and my feet, I can count all my bones" (Ps 22:16-17) and the division of his garments: "they divide my garments among them and for my vesture they cast lots" (ibid. v. 18).

Enter into the Paschal Mystery

4. Today's account of the Lord's Passion takes us right up to the moment when the body of Jesus, taken down from the cross, is laid in the rock tomb. At the same time today's liturgy is intended to introduce us more deeply into Christ's paschal mystery.

Hence the text of the second reading, taken from the Letter of St Paul to the Philippians, is the key to help us understand the full dimension of the divine mystery behind the events of Holy Week.

Who is Jesus Christ? We too can ask ourselves this question like those who saw him entering Jerusalem.

Jesus Christ "though he was in the form of God, did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at. Rather he emptied himself and took the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of men" (Phil 2:6-7).

Jesus Christ is therefore true God, the Son of God, who, having taken human form, became man. He lived on this earth as the Son of man. In him, precisely as the Son of man, the figure of the Servant of Yahweh announced by the prophet Isaiah, was fulfilled.

5. While Jesus makes his entry to Jerusalem mounted on a mule, we follow asking ourselves, probably not unlike the crowd that pressed around him, "what did Jesus Christ do in his life?".

Then we are reminded of that synthesis of his missionary activity, which we find in the inspired texts: "He did and taught" (cf. Acts 1:1); "he went around doing good... for all..." (cf. Acts 10:38); "No man ever spoke like that before" (Jn 7:46). Even so, all our answers about Christ would be incomplete if we did not speak about his death on the Cross. On the Cross the life of Christ takes on its full meaning; his death is the fundamental act of the life of Christ. Therefore the text from St Paul responds very well to the question which we asked before: "He was known to be of human state, and it was thus that he humbled himself, obediently accepting death, death on a cross!" (Phil 2:7-8).

The centre of Christ's entire life is the cross; it is the fundamental and definitive act of his messianic mission. In his death "his hour" is fulfilled (cf. Jn 18:37). Christ took on our flesh, he was born and lived among us in order to die for us.

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It is important to emphasize the Pauline statement: "he humbled himself, obediently accepting death". It would not be right to measure Christ's death with our present-day measure of human weakness and limitation. It must be viewed in the true measure of salvific obedience. His death is not just the end of life. Christ freely became obedient even to his death on the Cross, so that by his death he might give a new beginning to life: "Death came through a man; hence the resurrection of the dead comes through a man also. Just as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will come to life again" (1 Cor 15:21-22).

6. At the same time that he proclaims the infinite self-emptying of Christ, the Son who is one in substance with the Father and became man, Servant of Yahweh and Man of Sorrows, the apostle proclaims his exaltation. The paschal mystery embraces both the death and the glorious resurrection of Christ, his exaltation. This exaltation begins with the Cross which is not only the place of execution but also the glorious throne of God made man. By dying on the Cross, Christ gained true life for us; on the Cross, Christ overcame sin and death.

Therefore God exalted Christ, who gave himself up for us on the Cross. He exalts him across the horizon of the entire history of humanity subjected to death, and this exaltation has a cosmic dimension.

St Paul writes: "Because of this, God highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name above every other name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee must bend in the heavens, on the earth, and under the earth, and every tongue proclaim to the glory of God the Father: Jesus Christ is Lord!" (Phil 2:9-11).

Yes, Jesus Christ is Lord. We believe in Jesus Christ our Lord.

7. Dear friends, why has this day, Palm Sunday, become your Day?

This came about little by little; for some time past this day was drawing and bringing together, especially in Rome, large numbers of young pilgrims.

Maybe in this way you wanted to join with the young men and women in Jerusalem, the *pueri Hebraeorum*, who were present when Jesus arrived for the feast. You wanted to take on their enthusiasm, which was expressed in the words: "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

Nevertheless, enthusiasm does not last long. It can come to an end in a matter of a day. On the other hand, Palm Sunday leads us into the events of Holy Week, into the entire mystery of Jesus Christ: in his commitment even unto death on the Cross in obedience to the Father; the self-emptying of the Son, who, equal to the Father, took on the condition of a slave even to the last consequences.

It might be said that you young people were attracted by the Cross of Christ; that your enthusiasm, preceded by that of the *pueri Hebraeorum* and expressed also in your "Hosanna... Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord" finds its full meaning in the paschal mystery. In praising the prophet of Galilee, Jesus of Nazareth, you proclaim at the same time your faith in Jesus Christ as God and Man, Redeemer of humanity and of the world.

The gift of God's love

8. Yes, Palm Sunday leads us into the entire mystery of Jesus Christ, that is, into the paschal mystery, where all things come to fulfilment and where the truth of the words and the deeds of Jesus of Nazareth are fully confirmed. Here also the extent to which "God is love" is revealed (cf. 1 Jn 4:8). At the same time we are given a consciousness of the true dignity of the human person, ransomed by the price of the Blood of the Son of God and destined to live eternally with him in his love.

"We have come to know and to believe in the love which God has for us" (1 Jn 4:16). That is how St John expresses himself in the text that we are meditating upon as the theme of World Youth Day.

Dear young people, always celebrate the paschal mystery of Jesus in your lives. Take into your hearts the gift of God's love: "He loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20). Immersed in the divine power of love, commit your youthful energies to the construction of the civilization of love.

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Guided by your "sense of faith", follow both the voice of that which is deepest and noblest in the human heart and conscience, and the voice of that which corresponds to the interior truth of humanity and his dignity. In this way you will be able to understand the divine logic, to go beyond the poverty of human reasoning and to penetrate the new dimension of the love which Christ has shown for us.

That is the real reason why you have come to celebrate this day.

Come, young people! Gather around Christ, the Redeemer of humanity!

That is the meaning of your presence in St Peter's Square in Rome, and today in this great avenue in the capital of Argentina. Christ draws you here; it is he who calls you. Together with Jesus Christ, Mary, our Mother is here also; her image has been brought from the shrine of Lujan to be with us. At the end of this celebration I will commend you to her. I know very well what Our Lady of Lujan means to you, young people of Argentina. She is the focal point of your annual pilgrimages, in which many of you participate, filled with devotion for the Mother of God, and a generosity and hope that is there for all to see.

In you I see all who belong to your age group: the young men and women whom I have had the pleasure of meeting in many parts of the world as well as those I have never met. We are united in spirit with all of them, inviting them to draw closer to Christ on this blessed day.

9. To all of you I say: let yourselves be embraced by the mystery of the Son of man, the mystery of Christ who died and rose again. Let yourselves be embraced by the paschal mystery!

Let this mystery penetrate the depths of your being, your lives, your consciences, feelings, heart, so that it will give the truest meaning to your conduct.

The paschal mystery is salvific and creative. It is only in the mystery of Christ that humanity can truly and fully be understood; only in the death and resurrection of Christ can humanity understand its divine vocation and reach its final and definitive destiny.

Therefore, let the mystery act in you. For a person, especially a young person, it is essential that he know himself, that he know his value, his true value, the meaning of his existence, of his life, that he know his vocation. Only in this way can the meaning of one's life be defined.

10. It is only by accepting the paschal mystery in your lives that you will be able to respond to "anyone who should ask you the reason for this hope of yours" (1 Pet 3:15). Only by accepting Christ who died and rose again, will you be able to respond to the great and noble desires in your hearts.

Young people, Christ, the Church, the world, all depend and wait upon the witness of your lives, founded in the truth which Christ has revealed to us!

Young people, the Pope thanks you for your witness and he encourages you always to be witnesses to the love of Christ, sowers of hope and builders of peace!

"Lord, to whom shall we go? You alone have the words of eternal life" (Jn 6:68).

The One who gave himself, making himself obedient even to death on the Cross; he alone has the words of eternal life.

Listen to his words. Learn them deeply. Build your lives with the words and the life of Christ ever before you. Even more: learn to be Christ himself, by being identified with him in everything.

**December 13, 1987**

MESSAGGIO

DI GIOVANNI PAOLO II

PER LA III GIORNATA MONDIALE DELLA GIOVENTU'

«Fate quello che egli vi dirà» (Gv 2,5)

Carissimi giovani!

1. Anche quest'anno mi rivolgo a voi per annunciarvi la prossima Giornata Mondiale della Gioventù che si celebrerà nelle Chiese locali la Domenica delle Palme 1988. Questa volta la Giornata avrà, però, un carattere tutto particolare, poiché stiamo vivendo nella Chiesa l'anno mariano, che ho aperto nella solennità di Pentecoste e che chiuderò il 15 agosto dell'anno prossimo, solennità dell'Assunzione.

Alla fine del secondo millennio dell'era cristiana, in un momento critico della storia di un mondo travagliato da tanti difficili problemi, l'anno mariano costituisce per tutti noi un dono speciale. In quest'anno Maria appare ai nostri occhi sotto una luce nuova: madre piena di amore tenero e sensibile e maestra che ci precede nel cammino della fede e ci indica la strada della vita. L'anno mariano è quindi un anno di particolare ascolto di Maria. E così deve essere anche la prossima Giornata Mondiale della Gioventù. E' Maria che questa volta vi convoca - giovani! E' lei che vi dà appuntamento, perché ha molto da dirvi! Sono sicuro che - come negli anni precedenti - non mancherete di impegnarvi attivamente, sotto la guida dei vostri pastori, nella celebrazione della Giornata della Gioventù.

2. La Giornata Mondiale della Gioventù 1988 avrà quindi come suo centro Maria, Vergine e Madre di Dio, e sarà una giornata di ascolto. Che cosa ci dirà Maria, nostra madre e maestra? Nel Vangelo c'è una frase in cui Maria si mostra veramente come nostra maestra. E' la frase da lei pronunciata durante le nozze di Cana di Galilea. Dopo aver detto al Figlio: «Non hanno più vino», dice ai servitori: «Fate quello che egli vi dirà» (Gv 2,5).

Proprio queste parole ho scelto come filo conduttore della Giornata Mondiale 1988. Racchiudono un messaggio molto importante, valido per tutti gli uomini di tutti i tempi. «Fate quello che egli vi dirà...» vuol dire: ascoltate Gesù mio Figlio, seguite la sua parola e abbiate fiducia in lui. Imparate a dire «sì» al Signore in ogni circostanza della vostra vita. E' un messaggio molto confortante, di cui tutti sentiamo bisogno.

«Fate quello che egli vi dirà...». In queste parole Maria ha espresso soprattutto il segreto più profondo della sua stessa vita. Dietro queste parole sta tutta lei. La sua vita è stata infatti un grande «sì» al Signore. Un «sì» pieno di gioia e di fiducia. Maria piena di grazia, Vergine Immacolata, ha vissuto tutta la sua vita in una totale apertura a Dio, in perfetta consonanza con la sua volontà e ciò anche nei momenti più difficili, che hanno raggiunto l'apogeo sulla cima del monte Calvario, ai piedi della croce. Non ritira mai il suo «sì», perché ha posto tutta la sua vita nelle mani di Dio: «Eccomi, sono la serva del Signore, avvenga di me quello che hai detto» (Lc 1,38). Nell'enciclica «Redemptoris Mater» ho scritto a questo proposito: «Nell'annunciazione, infatti, Maria si è abbandonata a Dio completamente, manifestando "l'obbedienza della fede" a colui che le parlava mediante il suo messaggero e prestando "il pieno ossequio dell'intelletto e della volontà". Ha risposto dunque con tutto il suo "io" umano, femminile, ed in tale risposta di fede erano contenute una perfetta cooperazione con "la grazia di Dio che previene e soccorre" ed una perfetta disponibilità».

«Fate quello che egli vi dirà...». In questa breve frase si racchiude tutto il programma di vita che Maria maestra realizzò come prima discepola del Signore, e che oggi insegna anche a noi. E' un progetto di vita basata sul solido e sicuro fondamento che si chiama Gesù Cristo.

3. Il mondo in cui viviamo è scosso da varie crisi, tra le quali una delle più pericolose è la perdita del senso della vita. Molti dei nostri contemporanei hanno perso il vero senso della vita e ne cercano surrogati nel consumismo sfrenato, nella droga, nell'alcool e nell'erotismo. Cercano la felicità, ma il risultato è una profonda tristezza, un vuoto nel cuore e non di rado la disperazione.

In una simile situazione molti giovani si pongono interrogativi fondamentali: Come devo vivere la mia vita per non perderla? Su quale fondamento devo costruire la mia vita perché sia una vita veramente felice? Che cosa devo fare per dare un senso alla mia vita?

Come devo comportarmi in situazioni di vita spesso complesse e difficili - nella famiglia, nella scuola, nell'università, nel lavoro, nella cerchia degli amici?...Sono domande a volte molto drammatiche, che oggi certamente molti tra voi giovani si pongono.

Sono sicuro che tutti voi volete costruire la vostra vita su un fondamento solido, che renda capaci di resistere alle prove che non mancheranno mai - un fondamento di roccia. Ed ecco dinanzi a voi Maria, Vergine di Nazareth, l'umile ancella del Signore, che mostrando suo Figlio dice: «Fate quello che egli vi dirà», cioè ascoltate Gesù, ubbidite a Gesù, ai suoi comandamenti, abbiate fiducia in lui. Questo è l'unico progetto di una vita veramente riuscita e felice. Questa è anche l'unica fonte del più profondo senso della vita.

L'anno scorso durante la Giornata Mondiale della Gioventù avete meditato le parole di san Giovanni: «Noi abbiamo riconosciuto e creduto all'amore che Dio ha per noi» (1Gv 4,16). Quest'anno Maria spiega a voi, giovani, che cosa vuol dire credere e amare Dio. Fede e amore non si riducono alle parole o a sentimenti vaghi. Credere e amare Dio vuol dire una vita coerente, vissuta tutta alla luce del Vangelo, vuol dire impegno di fare sempre ciò che Gesù ci dice sia nella Sacra Scrittura che nell'insegnamento della Chiesa. Sì, questo non è facile, spesso richiede molto coraggio di andare contro le correnti della moda e delle opinioni di questo mondo. Ma questo - lo ripeto - è proprio l'unico progetto di una vita veramente riuscita e felice.

Tale è l'insegnamento di Maria alle nozze di Cana, insegnamento che vogliamo approfondire ed accogliere durante la Giornata Mondiale della Gioventù 1988.

Carissimi giovani! Vi invito tutti a partecipare a questo avvenimento assai importante. Venite ad ascoltare la Madre di Gesù, vostra madre e maestra!

4. Ogni Giornata Mondiale della Gioventù, per non diventare una celebrazione meramente esteriore e superficiale, esige un itinerario di preparazione nella pastorale diocesana e parrocchiale, nella vita dei gruppi, dei movimenti e delle associazioni giovanili, e ciò soprattutto nel periodo quaresimale.

Vi invito tutti a intraprendere questo cammino di preparazione spirituale, per cogliere meglio sia la grazia dell'anno mariano che il dono della Giornata Mondiale 1988. Meditate la vita di Maria. Meditatela soprattutto voi ragazze, le giovani. Per voi, la Vergine Immacolata costituisce un sublime modello di donna cosciente della propria dignità e della sua alta vocazione. Meditatela anche voi, ragazzi, i giovani! Ascoltando le parole pronunciate da Maria a Cana di Galilea: «Fate quello che egli vi dirà», cercate tutti di costruire la vostra vita fin dall'inizio sul solido fondamento che è Gesù. Vi auguro che la vostra meditazione del mistero di Maria trovi il suo sbocco nell'imitazione della sua vita: imparate da lei ad ascoltare e seguire la Parola di Dio (cfr. Lc 2,5), imparate da lei a stare vicino al Signore anche se questo alle volte può costare molto (cfr. Gv 19,25). Vi auguro che la vostra meditazione del mistero di Maria trovi anche il suo sbocco nella fiduciosa preghiera mariana. Cercate di scoprire la bellezza del rosario, che diventi fedele compagno per tutta la vostra vita.

Concludo questo breve messaggio con un cordiale saluto a tutti i giovani del mondo. Sappiate che il Papa è vicino a ciascuno di voi con le sue preghiere.

Nell'itinerario di preparazione spirituale e nella celebrazione stessa della Giornata Mondiale della Gioventù 1988 nella vostra diocesi vi accompagni la mia benedizione apostolica.

Dal Vaticano, 13 Dicembre 1987, Terza Domenica d'Avvento.

# 1988

March 27, 1988

3RD WORLD YOUTH DAY – ROME

Pope John Paul II: Discover the depths hidden in the Mystery of Christ

Homily of the Palm Sunday Liturgy, Rome, 27 March 1988

1. "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (Jn 6:68).



We celebrate the liturgy of Palm Sunday in St Peter's Square. This is also International Youth Day. Every year Palm Sunday brings together in this Square many young people who feel called to the event commemorated today. In fact, during Christ's messianic entrance into Jerusalem, there was no lack of young people among those who were shouting "Hosanna to the son of David". The liturgical hymn sings: "Pueri Hebraeorum portantes ramos olivarum obviaverunt Domino".

Pueri, that is, the young Jews. Obviaverunt, that is, they went to meet Christ. They sang "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord" (Mt 21:9). Every year on Palm Sunday the same thing happens; the young people go to meet Christ, they wave palm branches, they sing the messianic hymn to greet him who comes in the name of the Lord. It is so here in Rome, and in other places in the world. Last year it was so in Buenos Aires, where I had the opportunity to celebrate Youth Day, especially with the young people of Latin America.

Wherever you are, and on whatever day you assemble to celebrate your feast, all of you young people feel the need to repeat Peter's words: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life". You alone.

2. The "words of eternal life" today describe for us Christ's Passion and death according to St Mark's Gospel.

We have listened to this description. We have listened also to the words of the Prophet Isaiah, who from the distant centuries foretells the Messiah as a man of sorrows: "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I hid not my face from shame and spitting" (Is 50:6).

In fact, it was exactly so, as the prophet had foreseen.

It was also as the Psalmist—he too from ancient times—had proclaimed: "They have pierced my bands and feet—I can count all my bones... they divide my garments among them, and for my raiment they cast lots" (Ps 21 [22]:16-18).

It was so, and still more. The words with which the Prophet (David) begins his psalm are found on Christ's lips during the agony on the Cross: "My God, my God, why hast thou abandoned me?" (Eli, Eli, lemà sabactani?) (Mt 27:46; Ps 21 [22]:1).

It emerges from the Old Testament texts that Christ's Passion and death are the decisive fact of God's new and eternal Covenant with humanity.

Synthesis of the entire paschal mystery

3. Finally, we have listened to the Apostle Paul's disquieting words in the Letter to the Philippians. They are a synthesis of the entire paschal mystery. The text is concise, but at the same time its content is unfathomable, in keeping with the mystery. St Paul takes us to the very limit of that which began to exist between God and man in the story of creation, and which has reached its summit and fullness in Jesus Christ; in the final analysis, in the Cross and resurrection.

Christ Jesus, "though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Because of this God has exalted him..." (Phil 2:6-9).

Thus "the words of eternal life" are spoken by means of the Cross and death. They are not mere theory. They remain a reality between him who "Is" from eternity, who does not pass away, and him who passes away, for whom it has been laid down that he must die once only. At the same time man, who is created in the image and likeness of God, waits for the words of eternal life. He discovers them in Christ's gospel. They prove themselves definitively in his death and resurrection.

To whom shall we go?

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Christ is he who "by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and his love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear" (Gaudium et Spes, 22).

4. Why, then, has the "feast of youth" taken place for some years in the Church precisely on this day, Palm Sunday? It is true that this Youth Day is celebrated at different times in individual countries, but Palm Sunday remains a central point of reference for it.

Why? It seems that the young people themselves give a spontaneous answer to this question. One such response has been given by all of you who for years come on pilgrimage to Rome especially to celebrate this day. (This was verified particularly during the Year of the Redemption and the year dedicated to youth).

By this fact, do you yourselves not wish to indicate that you seek Christ in the centre of his mystery? You seek him in the fullness of that truth which is he himself in human history: "For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth" (Jn 18:37). You seek Christ in the definitive words of the gospel, just as the Apostle Paul has done; in the Cross, which is "the power of God and the wisdom of God" (I Cor 1:24), as the resurrection has confirmed.

In Christ, crucified and risen, you seek this very power and wisdom.

5. Christ reveals man to man, to each of us. Could he have shown himself "fully" if he had not undergone this suffering and this self-emptying without limit? If, in short, he had not exclaimed on the Cross: "Why hast thou forsaken me?" (cf. Mt 27:46)?

The subject is beyond human experience. Ineffable was the scale of his sufferings. He who has "the words of eternal life" did not hesitate to secure this word in all the dimensions of human transience.

"For this God has exalted him". For this, "Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (cf. Phil 2:9, 11). In this way he testifies to "his most high calling" (cf. Gaudium et Spes, 22). No disadvantage, no suffering or shame, can separate us from the love of God (cf. Rom 8:35), from that love which is in Christ Jesus.

6. This "Youth Day" in the Church is an eloquent moment in your "pilgrimage through faith".

In this year we turn our gaze towards the Mother of God, present in the mystery of Christ and of the Church, present also at the agony on Calvary. Precisely there the culmination of Mary's pilgrimage is found. In this regard, the Council, following the directions of tradition, teaches us that she precedes all of us on the way; she goes forward on the pilgrimage "of faith, charity and perfect union with Christ" (cf. Lumen Gentium, 63).

I hope that in the Marian Year all young people, looking on Mary as a guide, may discover all the depths hidden in the mystery of Christ.

Therefore Christ always says anew to young people as he said in the gospel: "Follow me" (Lk 8:22). A study of this call is found in the Letter to the Youth of the World, in the year 1985.

It is necessary that you hear this call. It is necessary that you constantly mature by giving your response to it.

"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life".

#### **November 27, 1988**

A message from John Paul II on the occasion of the 4th World Youth Day  
I am the way, the truth and the life (John 14,6)

Dearest young people!

1. I am very happy to be with you once again to announce the celebration of the 4th World Youth Day. This day, in fact, holds a special place in my dialogue with you, because it gives me the happy opportunity to

speak to young people all over the world, and to each and every one of you that the Pope looks to you with much love and hope, listens to you with great attention and wishes to answer to your deepest expectations.

The World Youth day of 1998 will be centred around the figure of Jesus Christ, as our way, our truth and our life (cf. John 14,6). This should, therefore, be a day for a new, more mature and more profound discovery of Christ in your life.

Youth is already a wealth in itself, owned by every young boy and girl (cf. *Epistula apostolica ad iuvenes internationali vertente anno iuventuti dicato, 3, die 31 mar. 1985: Teachings of John Paul II, VIII, 1 [1985] 760*). This wealth consists, among other things, in the fact that yours is an age of important discoveries. Each one of you discovers him/herself, his/her personality, the meaning of his/her existence and the reality of good and evil. You also discover the world that surrounds you - the world of men and the world of nature. Among these discoveries there is one which must not be lacking as it is of fundamental importance for every human being: the personal discovery of Jesus Christ. To discover Christ anew and to know Him better is the most wonderful adventure of our lives. Therefore, on the occasion of the next Youth Day, I would like to ask each one of you some very important questions and indicate the answers to these questions to you.

- Have you already discovered Christ, He who is the way? Yes, Jesus is a path for us leading to the Father - the only path. Those who wish to be saved must travel this path. Young people often find themselves at a crossroads, not knowing which path to choose, where to go; there are many wrong paths, many easy options and many ambiguities. In those moments, don't forget that Jesus, with his Gospel, his example and his commandments is always the safest and the only way, the path which leads to full and lasting happiness.

- Have you already discovered Christ, He who is the truth? Truth is the deepest and most serious requirement of the human spirit. Young people especially thirst for the truth concerning God and man, life and the world. In my first encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* I wrote: A man who wishes to understand himself completely, - not just according to the immediate, partial, often superficial or even illusory criteria and measures of his own being - must, with his apprehension and uncertainty and also with his weakness and sinfulness, with his life and death approach Christ (*Redemptor Hominis, 10*). Christ is the word of truth pronounced by God Himself in answer to all the questions of the human heart. He is the one who fully reveals to us the mystery of man and of the world.

- Have you already discovered Christ, He who is life? Each of you desires to live life in full. You live spurred by great hopes, by many great projects for the future. Don't forget, though, that the true fullness of life can only be found in Christ, who died and rose again for us. Only Christ can fill the human heart entirely. Only He gives the strength and joy of life, even in the face of every external limitation or impediment.

To discover Christ is the most beautiful adventure of your life. But it is not enough to discover Him once only. Every new discovery becomes an invitation to seek him ever more, to know Him even better through prayer, participation in sacraments, meditation upon His Word, catechesis, and the teachings of the Church. This is our most important task, as St Paul had well understood when he wrote: For to me to live is Christ (*Phil 1,21*).

2. A new discovery of Christ - when authentic - always gives birth to the desire to take Him to others - an apostolic commitment. This is the second theme of the next Youth Day.

The whole Church is the recipient of Christ's mandate: Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature (*Mk 16,15*). The whole Church, therefore, is missionary and evangelizing, and lives in a continuous state of mission (cf. *Ad Gentes, 2*). To be Christian means to be missionaries - apostles (cf. *Apostolicam Actuositatem, 2*). It is not enough to discover Christ - we must take Him to others!

Today's world is a fertile ground for missions, even in the countries of ancient Christian tradition. Widespread neo-paganism and the secularisation process are a great challenge to the evangelical message. But, at the same time, even nowadays, there are many new opportunities to announce the Gospel we can observe; for example, a growing nostalgia for the sacred, for authentic values and for prayer. Therefore, the world today needs many apostles - especially young and brave apostles. Young people in particular have

the task of carrying the message of faith today and of the Gospel of Christ - the path, the truth and life - into the third Christian millennium, of building a new civilization based on love, justice and peace.

New apostles are needed for each new generation and therefore there is a special mission for you. You young people are the first apostles and evangelizers of your world, tormented today by many challenges and menaces (cf. *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 12). You above all can do this, and no one can replace you in study, work and leisure environments. Many people your age do not know Christ, or do not know Him well enough. You cannot, therefore, remain silent and indifferent! You must have the courage to speak of Christ, to bring the message of your faith through your lifestyle inspired by the Gospel. St Paul writes: Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel! (1Cor 9,16). In fact, the evangelic harvest is great and many workers are needed. Christ trusts you and counts on your collaboration. On the occasion of the next Youth Day, I invite you, therefore, to renew your apostolic commitment. Christ needs you! Answer His call with the courage and enthusiasm typical of your age.

3. The famous Sanctuary in Santiago de the tomb of the apostle, we welcome Christ's new mandate: You shall be witnesses unto me... into the uttermost part of the earth (Mt 1,8). St James, who was the first to seal his faith with his blood, is an excellent example and a teacher for all of us.

Santiago de Compostela is not only a Sanctuary but also a path, that is, a dense network of pilgrimage itineraries. The Santiago Path was for centuries a path of conversion and of extraordinary demonstrations of faith. Along this path rose the visible monuments to the faith of the pilgrims: churches and numerous hospices.

Pilgrimage has a very deep spiritual significance and can in itself be an important catechesis. In fact - as the 2nd Vatican Council reminds us - the Church is a people of God in movement, searching for the future and permanent city (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 9). Today pilgrimage is witnessing a period of re-birth, especially among the young. You are among the most sensitive of those to relive, today, pilgrimage as a path of inner renewal, deepening of faith, strengthening of a sense of communion and solidarity between brothers, and as a means to discover personal vocations. I am certain that thanks to your youthful enthusiasm the Santiago Path will see a new and rich development this year.

4. This day's programme is very demanding. Therefore, in order to reap its fruits, a specific spiritual preparation under the guidance of your priests in the dioceses, parish churches, associations and movements is required, both for Palm Sunday and for the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in August 1989. At the beginning of this preparatory stage, I address all and each one of you with the words of the apostle Paul: Walk in love...; walk as children of light (Ef 5,2,8). Enter this preparation period with this spirit! Walk, then, I say to all of you young pilgrims of the Santiago Path. Try to relive, during the days of the pilgrimage, the spirit of the ancient pilgrims, courageous messengers of the Christian faith. During this pilgrimage, learn to discover Jesus, He who is our path, our truth and our life.

Finally, I would like to address a special word of encouragement to the young people of Spain. This time you will be those who offer hospitality to your brothers and sisters from all over the world. I hope this meeting in Santiago leaves profound marks on your life and that it may bring about spiritual renewal for all of you.

Dearest young people, I end this message with an embrace of peace which I would like to send to all of you, wherever you are. I entrust the preparation and celebration of the World Youth Day of 1989 to the particular protection of Mary, Queen of the apostles, and of St. James, venerated throughout the centuries at the ancient Sanctuary of Compostela. May my apostolic blessing accompany you, as a sign of encouragement and good wishes, along the whole itinerary.

From the Vatican, 27 November 1988.

# 1989

August 20, 1989

4TH WORLD YOUTH DAY – COMPOSTELA

Pope John Paul II: Christ, the way, the truth,  
the life

Homily at Youth Day Mass near Santiago de Compostela, Spain, 20 August 1989

1. "Peoples shall yet come, even the inhabitants of many cities; the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, 'Let us go at once to entreat the favour of the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts (Zech 8:20-21).

I cordially greet all those present!

Inhabitants of numerous cities! Representatives of many peoples and nations! You have come here not just from Galicia, from the whole of Spain, from all over Europe, from the Atlantic to the Urals, but also from North America and Latin America. the Middle East, from Africa, Asia and Oceania.

It is likewise a pleasure for me to greet the young people who have come from so many parish and diocesan communities, and from associations, movements and groups of the Church of God.

I greet the young people present at this Eucharistic Celebration and your contemporaries, wherever they may be.

I have invited you on this pilgrimage on the occasion of the World Youth Day of the Year of Our Lord 1989. I thank you wholeheartedly for your presence here.

2. This Place is united to the memory of the Apostle of Jesus Christ.

One of the two sons of Zebedee: James, brother of John. Through the Gospel we know his father's name and we also know his mother. We know that she intervened before Jesus on behalf of her sons: "Command that these two sons of mine may sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom" (Mt 20:21).

The mother was anxious to assure the future of her sons. She observed all that Jesus did; she had seen the divine power that accompanied his mission. She certainly believed that he was the Messiah announced by the prophets, the Messiah who was going to restore the kingdom of Israel (cf. Acts 1:6).

We should not be surprised at the attitude of this mother. We should not be surprised at a daughter of Israel who loved her people. And she loved her sons. She wanted for them what she considered a good thing.

3. Look at James, son of Zebedee, a fisherman like his father and brother; the son of a determined mother.

James followed Jesus of Nazareth. When, in reply to their mother's question the Master asked, "Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?", (Mt 20:22), James and his brother John answered without a doubt: "We are able" (Mt 20:22).

This is not a calculated reply, but rather one which is full of confidence.

James did not yet know, and in any case if he knew something, he did not fully know, what this "cup" meant. Christ was speaking of the cup which he himself had to drink, the cup which he had received from the Father.

The moment came when Christ fulfilled what he had earlier announced: he drank the cup which his Father had given him to the last drop.

The truth is that James was not with his Master on Golgotha. Neither were Peter nor the other Apostles. Only John remained with Christ's Mother, he alone.

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Nevertheless, later all of them understood—and James understood—the truth about the "cup". He understood that Christ had to drink it to the last drop. He understood that it was necessary for him to undergo all that; that he had to suffer death on a cross...

Christ, in effect, the Son of God, "came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mt 20:28).

Christ is the servant of human Redemption!

Thus: "whoever would be great among you must be your servant" (Mt 20:26).

4. Down through the centuries people from many cities and nations have come on pilgrimage here; to the Apostle to whom Christ said: "you will drink my cup".

Young people have come in pilgrimage to the tomb of the Apostle to learn that Gospel truth: "whoever would be great among you must be your servant".

In these words we find the essential criterion of human greatness. This criterion is new. It was new in the time of Christ and continues to be so two thousand years later.

This criterion is new. It implies a transformation, a renewal of the criteria by which the world is governed. "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you" (Mt 20:25-26).

The criterion by which the world is governed is the criterion of success. To have power... To have economic power, so as to make the dependence of others be seen. To have cultural power in order to manipulate consciences. To use... and to abuse!

Such is the "spirit of this world".

Does this mean perhaps that power in itself is evil? Does this mean that the economy—economic initiative—is in itself bad?

No! By no means. Both of them can also be a way of serving. This is the spirit of Christ, the truth of the Gospel. This truth and this spirit are expressed in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela through the Apostle, who—according to his mother's wish—would be the first; however—following Christ—he became a servant.

5. Why are you here, you young people of the nineties and of the twentieth century? Do you feel perhaps within yourselves "the spirit of this world", in so far as this era, rich in means of use and abuse, struggles against the spirit of the Gospel?

Have you not perhaps come here to convince yourselves once and for all that to be great means to serve? However... are you prepared to drink of this cup? Are you prepared to let yourselves be permeated by the body and blood of Christ, so as to die to the old man which is in us and rise again with him? Do you feel the Lord's strength which can enable you to bear your sacrifices, sufferings and the "crosses" which weigh upon the young people who are disoriented as regards the meaning of life, manipulated by power, unemployed, hungry, submerged in drugs and violence, slaves of the eroticism which is spreading everywhere ... ? Know that Christ's yoke is easy ... and that only in him will we find the hundredfold here and now, and eternal life later.

To be great means to serve

6. Why are you here, you young people of the nineties and of the twentieth century? Do you feel perchance within yourselves "the spirit of this world"?

Have you not perhaps come here—I ask you again—to convince yourselves once and for all that to be great means to serve? This service is certainly not mere humanitarian sentimentality. Nor is the community of

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the disciples of Christ a volunteer agency or social help group. Such a concept of service would imply stooping to the level of the "spirit of this world". No! Here we are dealing with something more. The radicality, quality and destiny of this "service" to which we have all been called must be seen in the context of the human Redemption. Because we have been created, we have been called, we have been destined, first and foremost, to serve God, in the image and likeness of Christ who, as Lord of all creation, as centre of the cosmos and of history, showed his royal power through obedience unto death, and was glorified in the Resurrection (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 36). The kingdom of God is realized by means of this "service", which is the fullness and measure of all human service. It does not act according to human criterion through power, might and money. Each one of us is asked for a total readiness to follow Christ, who "came not to be served, but to serve".

I invite you, dear friends, to discover your true vocation to cooperate in the spreading of this Kingdom of truth and life, of holiness and grace, of justice, love and peace. If you really wish to serve your brothers and sisters, let Christ reign in your hearts, let him help

you to discern and grow in dominion over yourselves, to strengthen you in the virtues, to fill you above all with his charity, to guide you along the path which leads to the "condition of the perfect one". Do not be afraid to be saints! This is the liberty with which Christ has set us free (cf. *Gal 5:1*), Not as the powers of this world promise it, with false hope and deceit: total autonomy, a breaking of every dependency as creatures and sons and daughters, an affirmation of self-sufficiency which leaves us defenceless before our limitations and weaknesses, alone in the prison of our egoism, slaves to the "spirit of this world", condemned to the "bondage of decay" (*Rom 8:21*).

For this reason, I ask the Lord to help you to grow in this "true freedom", as a basic and illuminating criterion of judgement and choice in life. This same freedom will direct our moral behaviour in truth and in charity. It will help you to discover authentic love, uncorrupted by an alienating and harmful permissiveness. It will make you people who are open to a possible total self-giving in the priesthood or consecrated life. It will make you grow in humanness through study and work. It will inspire your works of solidarity and your acts of service to those in need, whether in body or in soul. It will enable you to become "masters", so as to serve better, and not "slaves", victims and followers of the dominant trends in attitudes and ways of behaviour.

7. To serve: to be a person for others.

This is also a truth which the Apostle Paul teaches very eloquently, in the second Reading of today's liturgy.

"I bid every one among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgement, each according to the measure of faith which God has assigned to him" (*Rom 12:3*).

And the Apostle adds:

"Having gifts that differ" (*Rom 12:6*).

Yes! You need to know well the gifts God has granted you in Christ. It is necessary to know well the gift you have received, in order to give it to others, to contribute to the common good.

Yes. You need to perceive well the gifts God has granted you in Christ. You need to know well the gift you have received in the very experience of family and parish life, in working together with others in associations, and in the charismatic flourishing of movements, so as to be able to give it to others: thus to enrich the communion and missionary thrust of the Church, to be witnesses of Christ in your neighbourhood and school, in the university and factory, in places of work and recreation..., to contribute to the common good, as servants of experiences of growth in humanity, of dignity and solidarity, in which young people may be authentic protagonists of more human ways of life.

8. This is what the Apostle teaches. What he says is not just a mere teaching, but a fervent call.

"Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the

Lord. Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints, practise hospitality" (Rom 12:9-13).

Is he not perhaps saying this particularly to you, to young people? Does the fact that you are young not imply a particular sensitivity to this plan of life and action, to this world of values?

Does it not open towards this world? And if, by chance, it feels the resistance which comes from within, or indeed from without, does not your being young dispose you to struggle precisely for just such a "form" of life?

This form has been given to human life by Christ. He knows what is within man (cf. Jn 2:25).

"Christ the new Adam, in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his most high calling" (Gaudium et Spes, 22).

Dear young people, let yourselves be won by him! Christ alone is the way, the truth and the life as, in the remarkable Gospel synthesis, the theme of our World Youth Day proclaims.

O Mountain of joy, to which pilgrims have come, you remind us of one of the most beautiful characteristics of Santiago and its roads: universality.

I invite all those who travel it to maintain, as you have always done, the bonds of catholicity.

Find your personal vocation

9. You have come here on pilgrimage to the tomb of the Apostle who can confirm at first hand, if we can put it like that, the truth of the vocation of man, whose reference point is Christ.

You have come to find your personal vocation.

You draw close to the altar to offer, with the bread and wine, your youth, your search for truth, and everything which is good and beautiful in you.

All that creative restlessness.

All the sufferings of your young hearts.

10. Being here among you, I wish to say with the Psalmist: Behold "the earth has yielded its harvest" (Ps 67 [66]:6), its most precious fruit: the person, human youth.

May the Face of God reflected in the human face of Christ, Redeemer of man, shine before you.

"Let the peoples praise thee, O God; let all the peoples praise thee" (Ps 67 [66]:5).

May your contemporaries, contemplating your pilgrimage, be able to exclaim: "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you" (Zech 8:23).

This is the wish of the Pope, the Bishop of Rome, who has participated with you in this pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela.

**November 26, 1999**

MESSAGGIO  
DI GIOVANNI PAOLO II  
PER LA V GIORNATA MONDIALE DELLA GIOVENTU'

«Io sono la vite, voi i tralci» (Gv 15,5).

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Carissimi giovani!

1. Eccomi a voi per annunciarvi la prossima Giornata Mondiale della Gioventù. Mentre vi scrivo queste parole, ho ancora vivo nella memoria il ricordo di quella precedente, culminata nell'indimenticabile incontro a Santiago de Compostela, in Spagna, dove mi sono recato in pellegrinaggio, insieme con molti di voi. È stato, quello, un evento ecclesiale di grande portata, una eccezionale testimonianza di fede da parte di migliaia di giovani provenienti da tutti i continenti, un momento forte di evangelizzazione. A Santiago la Chiesa ha mostrato al mondo ancora una volta il suo volto giovane, pieno di gioia, di speranza e di entusiasmo nella fede. L'evento di Santiago è stato un grande dono per essa, anzi, oserei dire, per tutta la società; e di questo non cesserò mai di ringraziare il Signore.

Una nuova scoperta della Chiesa e della missione

Il tema della giornata precedente, come ricorderete, era incentrato su Cristo. Quest'anno, invece, vorrei proporvi di riflettere sul tema della Chiesa. Non si tratta di una correlazione casuale. Tra Cristo e la sua Chiesa esiste un vincolo organico assai stretto e profondo. Cristo vive nella Chiesa, la Chiesa è il mistero di Cristo vivente ed operante in mezzo a noi come si esprime san Paolo: «Cristo in voi, speranza della gloria» (Col 1,27); e in altro luogo «Voi siete corpo di Cristo e sue membra, ciascuno per la sua parte» (1Cor 12,27).

In occasione di questa quinta Giornata Mondiale della Gioventù, desidero quindi invitare tutti voi ad una nuova scoperta della Chiesa e della vostra missione in essa, in quanto giovani.

La Chiesa di Cristo è una realtà affascinante e meravigliosa. Essa è antica, perché conta quasi duemila anni, ma, allo stesso tempo, è perennemente giovane, grazie allo Spirito Santo che la anima. Giovane è la Chiesa, perché giovane, cioè sempre attuale, è il suo messaggio di salvezza.

Per questo esiste un dialogo così importante tra la Chiesa e i giovani: «La Chiesa ha tante cose da dire ai giovani e i giovani hanno tante cose da dire alla Chiesa. Questo reciproco dialogo, da attuarsi con grande cordialità, chiarezza e coraggio... sarà fonte di ricchezza e di giovinezza per la Chiesa...» ho scritto nell'esortazione apostolica «Christifideles Laici» (46). Vorrei che la quinta giornata contribuisse allo sviluppo di questo dialogo tanto a tutti i livelli della vita ecclesiale che nell'esistenza di ciascuno di voi.

Un impegno nella Chiesa e nella società

2. Nella Bibbia, tra le numerose immagini che esprimono il mistero della Chiesa, troviamo anche l'immagine della vigna (cfr. Ger 2,21; Is 5,1-7). La Chiesa è la vigna piantata dal Signore stesso, una vigna che gode del suo particolare amore.

Nel Vangelo di Giovanni, Cristo ci spiega il principio fondamentale della vita di questa vigna, quando dice: «Io sono la vite, voi i tralci» (Gv 15,5). Sono proprio queste le parole che ho scelto come tema della prossima Giornata Mondiale della Gioventù. Rivolgo perciò a tutti voi un appello: Giovani, siate tralci vivi della Chiesa, siate tralci carichi di frutti!

Essere tralci vivi nella Chiesa-vigna significa, innanzitutto essere in comunione vitale con Cristo-vite. I tralci non sono autosufficienti, ma dipendono totalmente dalla vite. In essa si trova la sorgente della loro vita. Così, nel Battesimo, ciascuno di noi è stato innestato in Cristo ed ha ricevuto gratuitamente il dono della vita nuova. Per essere tralci vivi, dovete vivere questa realtà del vostro Battesimo, approfondendo ogni giorno la vostra comunione col Signore mediante l'ascolto e l'obbedienza alla sua Parola, la partecipazione all'Eucaristia e al sacramento della Riconciliazione, e il colloquio personale con lui nella preghiera. Gesù dice: «Chi rimane in me, ed io in lui, fa molto frutto, perché senza di me non potete fare nulla» (Gv 15,5).

Essere tralci vivi nella Chiesa-vigna significa anche assumersi un impegno nella comunità e nella società. Ce lo spiega in modo molto chiaro il Concilio Vaticano II: «Come nella compagine di un corpo vivente non vi è membro alcuno che si comporti in maniera del tutto passiva, ma insieme con la vita del corpo ne partecipa anche l'attività, così nel corpo di Cristo, che è la Chiesa, "tutto il corpo... secondo l'energia propria ad ogni singolo membro... contribuisce alla crescita del corpo stesso" (Ef 4,16)» («Apostolicam Actuositatem», 2).

Tutti, a seconda delle nostre vocazioni particolari, siamo partecipi della missione di Cristo e della sua Chiesa. La comunione ecclesiale è una comunione missionaria.

La Chiesa ha bisogno di molti operai. In questa quinta Giornata Mondiale Cristo stesso rivolge a voi giovani un grande invito: «Andate anche voi, nella mia vigna» (Mt 20,4).

La Chiesa è una comunione organica, in cui ciascuno ha il proprio posto e il proprio compito. Lo avete anche voi giovani. E' un posto molto importante, il vostro. La Chiesa, che alle soglie degli anni duemila si sente chiamata dal Signore a rendere sempre più intenso il suo sforzo evangelizzatore, ha particolare bisogno di voi, del vostro dinamismo, della vostra autenticità, della vostra appassionata voglia di crescere, della freschezza della vostra fede. Mettete quindi al servizio della Chiesa i vostri giovani talenti senza riserve, con la generosità propria della vostra età. Prendete il vostro posto nella Chiesa, che non è solo quello di destinatari di cura pastorale, ma soprattutto di protagonisti attivi della sua missione (cfr. «Christifideles Laici», 46). La Chiesa è vostra, anzi, voi stessi siete la Chiesa!

Da parte sua, la Chiesa ha tanto da offrire a voi giovani. Assistiamo oggi ad un fenomeno molto significativo. Dopo un periodo di diffidenza e di distacco nei confronti della Chiesa, ora numerosi giovani la stanno riscoprendo come guida sicura e fedele, come luogo indispensabile di comunione con Dio e con i fratelli, come ambiente di crescita spirituale e di impegno. E' un segno molto eloquente. Molti di voi non si contentano più di appartenere alla Chiesa in modo meramente formale, anagrafico. Cercano qualcosa di più.

Luogo privilegiato di riscoperta della Chiesa e dell'impegno ecclesiale sono le associazioni, i movimenti e le varie comunità ecclesiali giovanili. Infatti parliamo oggi di una «nuova stagione aggregativa» nella Chiesa (cfr. «Christifideles Laici», 29). Questa è una ricchezza enorme ed un dono prezioso dello Spirito Santo, che va accolto con tanta riconoscenza.

«Andate anche voi nella mia vigna» (Mt 20,4). La Chiesa-vigna ha bisogno anche di operai particolari, che la servano in maniera specifica, con radicalismo evangelico, consacrando tutta la loro vita. Si tratta delle vocazioni sacerdotali e religiose come pure delle vocazioni dei laici consacrati nel mondo. Sono sicuro che molti di voi, meditando il mistero della Chiesa, sentiranno nel profondo dell'animo l'invito di Cristo: «Va' anche tu nella mia vigna...». Se udrete questa voce rivolta personalmente a voi, non esitate a rispondere «sì» al Signore. Non abbiate paura, perché servire Cristo e la sua Chiesa in modo totale è una vocazione stupenda ed un dono magnifico. Cristo vi aiuterà.

E' questo, a grandi linee, l'argomento sostanziale della prossima Giornata Mondiale, giornata di riscoperta della Chiesa.

Scoprire la Chiesa diocesana e la Chiesa parrocchiale

3. La quinta Giornata Mondiale della Gioventù 1990 sarà celebrata nella domenica delle palme, in ciascuna delle vostre diocesi.

E' proprio la Chiesa diocesana che dovete scoprire. La Chiesa non è una realtà astratta e disincarnata; al contrario, è una realtà molto concreta: per l'appunto, una Chiesa diocesana riunita attorno al Vescovo, successore degli apostoli. Ed è anche la Chiesa parrocchiale che dovete scoprire, la sua vita, i suoi bisogni e le numerose comunità che esistono ed operano in essa. In questa Chiesa porterete la gioia e lo slancio provati negli incontri mondiali come quello di Santiago e nelle riunioni dei movimenti e associazioni, di cui fate parte. Di questa Chiesa concreta voi giovani dovete essere tralci vivi e fecondi, cioè coscienti e responsabilmente partecipi della sua missione. Accogliete questa Chiesa con tutta la sua ricchezza spirituale; accoglietela nella persona dei vostri Vescovi, dei sacerdoti, dei religiosi e anche dei fratelli nella fede; accoglietela con fede e con amore di figli.

La Giornata Mondiale, come vedete, non è solo una festa ma anche un serio impegno spirituale. Per poterne cogliere i frutti, è necessario un cammino di preparazione sotto la guida dei vostri Pastori nelle diocesi, nelle parrocchie, nelle associazioni, nei movimenti e nelle comunità ecclesiali giovanili. Cercate di conoscere meglio la Chiesa, la sua natura, la sua storia, ormai bimillenaria, e il suo presente. Cercate di scoprire il vostro posto nella Chiesa e la vostra missione in quanto giovani.

In questo cammino spirituale vi potrà aiutare la mia esortazione apostolica «Christifideles Laici» (1988), che ho dedicato proprio alla meditazione della vocazione e della missione dei fedeli laici nella Chiesa e nel mondo. Invito i vostri pastori ad aiutarvi a coglierne meglio il messaggio.

Affido il processo di preparazione spirituale e la celebrazione stessa della prossima Giornata Mondiale della Gioventù 1990 all'intercessione particolare della Madonna. Ella, che veneriamo come madre della Chiesa, vi sia maestra e guida in questo rinnovato impegno ecclesiale.

A tutti voi invio con affetto la mia benedizione.

Dal Vaticano, il 26 novembre dell'anno 1989, solennità di nostro Signore Gesù Cristo re dell'universo.

# 1990

**April 8, 1990**

5TH WORLD YOUTH DAY – ROME

Pope John Paul II: Humiliation which exalts

Homily of the Palm Sunday Liturgy, 8 April 1990

1. "Hosanna to the son of David.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord...  
Hosanna in the highest" (Mt 21:9).

Today Jesus comes to Jerusalem. And today is the day which the liturgy recalls a week before Easter.

Today is the day when the crowds surround Jesus. Among the crowds there are young people. In a special way this is their day. This day is your day, dear young people—here in St Peter's Square, and simultaneously in so many other places on earth, where the Church is celebrating the liturgy of Palm Sunday—as your special feastday.

This is your day. As Bishop of Rome I go out along with you to meet Christ who comes. "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." Together with you—and together with others your age in every part of the world. I unite myself spiritually as well to those places where youth day is celebrated on another day during the liturgical year.

Behold, the large crowd extends across nations and continents! This crowd surrounds Christ as he enters into Jerusalem, as he goes to an appointment with his "hour", as he draws near to his Paschal mystery.

2. Only once did Jesus of Nazareth make his solemn entrance into Jerusalem for Easter. And only once did he accomplish what the coming days will confirm. But at the same time he has remained within this coming of his. Once and for all he has inscribed in humanity's history what St Paul proclaims in today's liturgy.

Behold:

"Though he was in the form of God,  
he did not regard equality with God  
something to be grasped at.  
Rather, he emptied himself,  
taking the form of a slave,  
coming in human likeness;  
and found human in appearance,  
he humbled himself,  
becoming obedient to death,  
even death on the cross" (Phil 2:6-9).

Jesus Christ—the Son of God, one in substance with the Father—humbled himself as man... emptied himself as man, accepting death on the Cross, which, humanly speaking, is the worst sort of shame.

In that emptying, Jesus Christ was exalted above everything. God himself exalted him and bound the exaltation of the Son to human and world history.

In him human and world history have a divine measure. "Jesus Christ is LORD to the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2:11).

3. All of us present here in St Peter's Square or in whatever other place in the world, we who enter with Christ into Jerusalem, we profess, announce and proclaim Christ's Paschal mystery which is lasting. It goes on in the Church and, through the Church, in humanity and the world.

We profess, announce and proclaim the mystery of this humiliation which exalts, of this emptying which gives eternal life.

In this mystery—in Christ's Paschal mystery—God has thoroughly revealed himself. God who is love.

And in this mystery—in Christ's Paschal mystery—man has been thoroughly revealed. Christ has thoroughly revealed man to man, and has made man aware of his very high calling (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 22).

Man, in fact, exists between the borders of humiliation and emptying by death and the unsuppressible desire for exaltation, dignity and glory.

That is the measure of the human being. That is the extent of the human being's earthly needs. That is the meaning of the human being's dignity which cannot be renounced and the basis for all human rights.

In the Paschal mystery Christ enters into the human being's scale. He embraces the full extent of human existence. He takes it all within himself. He confirms it, and at the same time he goes beyond it.

When he enters into Jerusalem he keeps an appointment with his own suffering—and at the same time he keeps an appointment with the suffering of all human persons—not so much to reveal its misery as much as its redemptive potential.

When he enters into Jerusalem, he also keeps an appointment with exaltation which, in him, the Father offers to all people. "I am the resurrection and the life; anyone who believes in me, even though he dies, will live" (Jn 11:25).

4. Therefore, in this way let us enter with Christ into Jerusalem. "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."

By walking together with him, we are the Church which speaks in the languages of so many peoples, nations, cultures and generations, In fact, in all languages she announces the very mystery of Jesus Christ: the Paschal mystery. The measure of man is encapsulated in this mystery in a special way. In this mystery the measure of man is imbued with divine power—by the greatest of all powers, which is love,

We all carry Christ within us, Christ who is "the vine" (cf. Jn 15:5) from which human and world history germinate. Christ who is the endless leaven of new life in God.

Blessed is he who comes...

Hosanna!

**May 20, 1990**

Pope John Paul II's Homily From the Beatification Mass of Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati

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1. "I will ask the Father, and he will send you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth" (Jn 14:16). During the Easter season, as we progressively draw near to Pentecost, these words become more and more timely. They were spoken by Jesus in the Upper Room the day before his Passion, as he took leave of his Apostles. His departure--the departure of the Beloved Master through his death and resurrection--prepares the way for another Advocate (Jn 16:7). The Paraclete will come; he will come precisely because of Christ's redemptive departure which makes possible and inaugurates God's new merciful presence among people. The Spirit of Truth, whom the world neither sees nor knows, however, makes itself known by the Apostles, because "it remains with them and will be in them" (cf. Jn 14:17). And everyone will become witnesses to this on the day of Pentecost.

2. Pentecost, however, is only the beginning, because the Spirit of Truth comes to remain with the Church for ever (cf. Jn 14:16), endlessly renewing itself in future generations. Therefore the words of the Apostle Peter are addressed not only to the people of his day, but also to all of us and our contemporaries. "Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope" (1 Peter 3:15). In our century, Pier Giorgio Frassati incarnated these words of St. Peter in his own life. The power of the Spirit of Truth, united to Christ, made him a modern witness to the hope which springs from the Gospel and to the grace of salvation which works in human hearts. Thus he became a living witness and courageous defender of this hope in the name of Christian youth of the twentieth century.

3. Faith and charity, the true driving forces of his existence, made him active and diligent in the milieu in which he lived, in his family and school, in the university and society; they transformed him into a joyful, enthusiastic apostle of Christ, a passionate follower of his message and charity. The secret of his apostolic zeal and holiness is to be sought in the ascetical and spiritual journey which he traveled; in prayer, in persevering adoration, even at night, of the Blessed Sacrament, in his thirst for the Word of God, which he sought in Biblical texts; in the peaceful acceptance of life's difficulties, in family life as well; in chastity lived as a cheerful, uncompromising discipline; in his daily love of silence and life's "ordinariness." It is precisely in these factors that we are given to understand the deep well-spring of his spiritual vitality. Indeed, it is through the Eucharist that Christ communicates his Spirit; it is through listening to the word that the readiness to welcome others grows, and it is also through prayerful abandonment to God's will that life's great decisions mature. Only by adoring God who is present in his or her own heart can the baptized Christian respond to the person who "asks you for a reason for your hope" (1 Pt 3:15). And the young Frassati knew it, felt it, lived it. In his life, faith was fused with charity: firm in faith and active in charity, because without works, faith is dead (cf. James 2:20).

4. Certainly, at a superficial glance, Frassati's lifestyle, that of a modern young man who was full of life, does not present anything out of the ordinary. This, however, is the originality of his virtue, which invites us to reflect upon it and impels us to imitate it. In him faith and daily events are harmoniously fused, so that adherence to the Gospel is translated into loving care for the poor and the needy in a continual crescendo until the very last days of the sickness which led to his death. His love for beauty and art, his passion for sports and mountains, his attention to society's problems did not inhibit his constant relationship with the Absolute. Entirely immersed in the mystery of God and totally dedicated to the constant service of his neighbor: thus we can sum up his earthly life!

He fulfilled his vocation as a lay Christian in many associative and political involvements in a society in ferment, a society which was indifferent and sometimes even hostile to the Church. In this spirit, Pier Giorgio succeeded in giving new impulse to various Catholic movements, which he enthusiastically joined, but especially to Catholic Action, as well as Federation of Italian Catholic University Students [FUCI], in which he found the true gymnasium of his Christian training and the right fields of his apostolate. In Catholic Action he joyfully and proudly lived his Christian vocation and strove to love Jesus and to see in him the brothers and sisters whom he met on his way or whom he actively sought in their places of suffering, marginalization and isolation, in order to help them feel the warmth of his human solidarity and the supernatural comfort of faith in Christ.

He died young, at the end of a short life, but one which was extraordinarily filled with spiritual fruits, setting out for his "true homeland and singing God's praises."

5. Today's celebration invites all of us to receive the message which Pier Giorgio Frassati is sending to the men and women of our day, but especially to you young people, who want to make a concrete contribution to the spiritual renewal of our world, which sometimes seems to be falling apart and wasting away because of a lack of ideals. By his example he proclaims that a life lived in Christ's Spirit, the Spirit of the Beatitudes, is "blessed", and that only the person who becomes a "man or woman of the Beatitudes" can succeed in communicating love and peace to others. He repeats that it is really worth giving up everything to serve the Lord. He testifies that holiness is possible for everyone, and that only the revolution of charity can enkindle the hope of a better future in the hearts of people.

6. Yes, "tremendous are the deeds of the Lord". Shout joyfully to God all you on earth" (Ps 66:1-3). The verse of the Psalm resound in this Sunday liturgy as a living echo of young Frassati's soul. Indeed, we all know how much he loved the world God created! "Come and see the works of God" (Ps 65/66:5): this is also an invitation which we receive from his young soul and which is particularly addressed to young people. Come and see God's "tremendous deeds among men" (ibid.). Tremendous deeds among men and women! Human eyes -- young, sensitive eyes -- must be able to admire God's work in the external, visible world. The eyes of the spirit must be able to turn from this external, visible world to the inner, invisible one: thus they can reveal to others the realm of the spirit in which the light of the Word that enlightens every person is reflected (cf. Jn 1:9). In this light the Spirit of Truth acts.

7. This is the "inner" person. This is how Pier Giorgio appears to us. Indeed, his entire life seems to sum up Christ's words which we find in John's Gospel: "Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come and make our dwelling with him" (Jn 14:23). This is the "inner" person loved by the Father, loved because he or she has loved much! Is love not possibly what is most needed in our twentieth century, at its beginning, as well as at its end? Is it perhaps not true that the only thing that lasts, without ever losing its validity, is the fact that a person "has loved"?

8. He left this world rather young, but he made a mark upon our entire century, and not only on our century. He left this world, but in the Easter power of his Baptism, he can say to everyone, especially to the young generations of today and tomorrow:

"You will see me, because I live and you will live" (Jn 14:19).

These words were spoken by Jesus Christ when he took leave of his Apostles before undergoing his Passion. I like to think of them as forming on the lips of our new Blessed himself as a persuasive invitation to live from Christ and in Christ. This invitation is still valid, it is valid today as well, especially for today's young people, valid for everyone. It is a valid invitation which Pier Giorgio Frassati has left for us. Amen.

**August 15, 1990**

MESSAGE  
OF THE HOLY FATHER  
POPE JOHN PAUL II  
FOR THE VI WORLD YOUTH DAY

"You have received a spirit of sonship" (Rom 8:15).

Dear young people!

1. The World Youth Days mark important stages in the life of the Church, as she seeks to intensify her commitment to evangelization in today's world, looking towards the year 2000. By proposing every year for your meditation certain essential truths of the Gospel teaching, these Days are intended to give nourishment for your faith and new energies for your apostolate.

As theme of the Sixth World Youth Day, I have chosen the words of St Paul: "You have received a spirit of sonship" (Rom 8:15). These words lead us into the deepest mystery of the Christian vocation: in the divine plan, we are indeed called to become sons and daughters of God in Christ, through the Holy Spirit.

How can we fail to be amazed at the heights to which we are called? The human being — a created and limited being, even a sinner — is destined to be a child of God! How can we fail to exclaim with St John: "See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are!" (I Jn 3:1)? How can we remain indifferent to this challenge of God's paternal love, inviting us to so deep and intimate a communion?

As you celebrate the next World Day, let this holy amazement take possession of you, inspiring in each one of you an ever more filial attachment to God, our Father.

2. "You have received a spirit of sonship..." The Holy Spirit, the true agent of our divine sonship, has regenerated us to new life in the waters of Baptism. From that moment, he "bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Rom 8:16).

What does it mean, in the life of the Christian, to be a son or daughter of God: St Paul writes: "All who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God" (Rom 8:14). To be sons and daughters of God means, therefore, to receive the Holy Spirit, to let ourselves be guided by him, to be, open to his action in our personal history and in the history of the world.

To all of you young people, on the occasion of this World Youth Day, I say: Receive the Holy Spirit and be strong in faith! "God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and selfcontrol" (2 Tim 1:7).

"You have received a spirit of sonship..." The children of God, that is the men and women re-born in Baptism and strengthened in Confirmation, are among the first to build a new civilization, the civilization of truth and love: they are the light of the world and the salt of the earth (cf. Mt 5:13-16).

I am thinking of the profound changes taking place in the world. For many peoples the doors are opening the hope of a life more worthy of them and more human. In this connection, I recall the truly prophetic words of the Second Vatican Council: "The Spirit of God, who with marvellous providence directs the course of history and renews the face of the earth, is present in this evolution" (Gaudium et spes, 26).

Yes, the Spirit of the sons and daughters of God is the driving force in the history of peoples. In every age, the Spirit raises up new men and women who live in holiness, in truth and in justice. On the threshold of the year 2000, the world that is anxiously seeking ways of living together in greater solidarity urgently needs to count on persons who, with the help of the Holy Spirit, are capable of living as true children of God.

3. "The proof that you are sons is that God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts: the Spirit that cries, 'Abba, Father', and it is this that makes you a son; you are not a slave any more; and if God has made you son, then He has made you heir" (Gal 4:6-7). St Paul speaks to us of the heritage of the sons and daughters of God. What is meant is a gift of eternal life, but at the same time, a task to be carried out already today, a design for life that is fascinating, especially for you young people, who, in your inmost hearts have a yearning for high ideals.

Holiness is the essential heritage of the children of God. Christ says: "Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt 5:48). This means doing the will of the Father in every circumstance of life. It is the high road that Jesus has pointed out to us: "Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord', shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Mt 7:21).

I repeat again today what I said at Santiago de Compostela: "Young people, do not be afraid to be holy!" Fly high, be among those whose goals are worthy of sons and daughters of God. Glorify God in your lives!

4. The heritage of the sons and daughters of God includes brotherly love, after the example of Jesus, first-born among many brothers and sisters (cf. Rom 8:29): "Love one another, as I have loved you" (Jn 15:12). If we call upon God as "Father", we cannot fail to recognize in our neighbour — whoever this may be — a brother or sister who has a right to our love. This is the great commitment for the children of God: working to build a society in which all peoples will give fraternally together.

Is not this what the world most needs today? Within nations we can feel the strength of longing for unity that will break down every barrier of indifference and hate. It is especially for you, young people, to take on the great task of building a society where there will be more justice and solidarity.

5. Another prerogative of the children of God is freedom; this also is part of their heritage. We touch here on a subject to which you young people are particularly sensitive, because what is at issue is an immense gift that the Creator has placed in our hands. But a gift that must be used rightly. How many false forms of freedom there are, leading to slavery!

In the Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* I wrote on this subject: "Jesus Christ meets the men and women of every age, including our own, with the same words: 'You will know the truth and the truth will make you free' (Jn 8:32). These words contain both a fundamental requirement and a warning: the requirement of an honest relationship to truth as a condition for authentic freedom, and the warning to avoid every kind of illusory freedom, every superficial unilateral freedom, every freedom that fails to enter into the whole truth about the human being and the world. Today also, even after two thousand years, we see Christ as the one who brings men and women freedom based on truth..." (n. 12).

"When Christ freed us he meant us to remain free" (Gal 5:1). Liberation by Christ is liberation from sin, the root of all human slaveries. St Paul says: "You who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness" (Rom 6:17). Freedom, therefore, is a gift and, at the same time, an essential duty for every Christian: "You did not receive the spirit of slavery..." (Rom 8:15), the Apostle reminds us.

Exterior freedom, guaranteed by just civil laws, is important and necessary. We rightly rejoice that today, in an ever increasing number of countries, the fundamental rights of the human person are respected, even if, not infrequently, there has been a high price to pay in sacrifice and bloodshed. But, however precious, exterior freedom alone is not enough. It must be rooted always in the interior freedom that belongs to the children of God, who live according to the Spirit (cf. Gal 5:16) and are guided by an upright moral conscience, capable of choosing what is truly good. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (2 Cor 3:17). This, dear young people, is the only path to take if humankind is to become mature and worthy of its name.

See, then, how great and challenging is the heritage of the sons and daughters of God, to which you are called. Receive it with gratitude and responsibility. Do not waste it! Have the courage, every day, to live by it consistently and to announce it to others. In this way, the world will become, more and more, the great family of the sons and daughters of God.

6. At the heart of the World Youth Day 1991 there will be another world youth rally.

This time, to conclude the customary meetings and celebrations in the dioceses, we will meet to pray together at the Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa, in Poland, my home country. Many of you, remembering the experience of the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela (1989), will flock joyfully to this rendezvous on the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 14 and 15 August 1991. In our hearts and in our prayers, we will bring with us the youth of the whole world.

Set out therefore, already now, on your way to the dwelling of the Mother of Christ and our Mother, meditating, under her loving gaze, on the theme of the Sixth World Day: "You have received a spirit of sonship..."

Where better than at the feet of God's Mother can we learn what it means to be sons and daughters of God? Mary is the best teacher. The role entrusted to her was fundamental for the history of salvation: "When the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons" (Gal 4:4-5).

Where better than in her maternal heart can we guard the heritage of the sons and daughters of God Promised by the Father? We bear this gift in vessels of clay. For each one of us, our pilgrimage will be, therefore, a great act of entrustment to Mary. We will be going to a Shrine which, for the Polish people,



has a very special significance as a place of evangelization and conversion; a Shrine to which thousands of pilgrims make their way from all parts of the country and of the world.

For more than 600 years, in the Monastery of Jasna Góra at Czestochowa, Mary has been venerated in the miraculous icon of the Black Madonna. There, at the most difficult moments of its history, the Polish people has found, in the Mother's house, the strength of faith and hope, its own dignity and the heritage of the children of God.

For the young people of East and West, of North and South, for all, the pilgrimage to Czestochowa will be a witness of faith to the whole world. It will be a pilgrimage of freedom across the frontiers of States which, more and more, are opening to Christ, Redeemer of humanity.

7. My intention with this Message is to inaugurate the journey of spiritual preparation both for the Sixth World Youth Day and for the pilgrimage to Czestochowa. These reflections are meant to serve as initial steps on this journey, which is above all one of faith, of conversion and of a return to the essentials of our life.

For you, young people of the countries of Eastern Europe, I have a word of special encouragement. Do not miss this appointment. Already now, it can be seen as a memorable encounter between the youth of the Churches of East and West. Your presence at Czestochowa will be an immensely meaningful witness to faith.

And you, dear young people of my beloved Poland, you are called this time to give hospitality to your friends from all parts of the world. For you and for the Church of Poland this encounter, in which I too will take part, will be an extraordinary spiritual gift at this moment of your history, so full of hope for the future.

Kneeling in spirit before the image of the Black Madonna of Czestochowa I entrust to her loving protection the whole event of the Sixth World Youth Day.

For you, dear young people, my warm paternal Blessing.

From the Vatican, 15 August 1990, Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

# 1991

**August 15, 1991**

6TH WORLD YOUTH DAY – CZESTOCHOWA

Pope John Paul II: Mary's pilgrimage through faith

Homily for Solemnity of the Assumption, Jasna Góra, Poland, 1991

1. "Those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God" (Rom 8:14).

Dear Friends, Brothers and Sisters from Poland and various parts of the world.

I begin this homily, which is entirely in Polish, with some trepidation. However, if there is something to console me, it is the realization that our guests can also hear it in their own language. It is a little like Pentecost in Jerusalem. And not only because those who have come from afar can participate in this liturgical event while "listening to" the homily with the aid of the screens so graciously offered to us by our Italian brothers. Last of all, I am also consoled because of the beautiful weather and the sunshine.

Mr President of the Republic, Mr Prime Minister, Representatives of the Government and the Parliament, all of you, my dear Brothers in the episcopate, Cardinals, Bishops, all of my brother priests, brothers and sisters in the religious vocation, in the Christian and human vocation, all of you present here.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, I greet all of you, my dear young people, who have gathered here from various European countries and from other continents. You have come to Jasna Góra with

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the knowledge that you received a spirit of adoption" (Rom 8:15). Thanks to this "you are heirs of God", and at the same time, "joint heirs with Christ" (Rom 8:17). Together with him you can exclaim: "Abba, Father!" (Rom 8:15). In fact, "the Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Rom 8:16).

In our meeting last evening we reflected on the truth concerning your vocation in Christ, by concentrating on three signs: the Cross, the Bible and the image of Mary.

In today's solemnity we wish to turn our attention in a particular way to the woman who was especially guided by the Spirit of God: Mary. We greet her as the beloved daughter of God the Father, who was chosen as the human mother of the Son of God. We greet Mary as the one who accepted this eternal election, giving birth to Jesus Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit: the Virgin of Nazareth believed that what is impossible for men is possible for God (cf. Lk 1:37).

2. With particular solemnity the Church today celebrates her Assumption into heaven. This definitive fulfilment of the life and vocation of the Mother of God allows us—in the light of the liturgy—to look at Mary's whole preceding earthly life, at her maternal pilgrimage through faith. During the visitation, the words of Elizabeth express this in a much more precise and, at the same time, complete way: "Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled" (Lk 1:45).

The words heard by Mary at the Annunciation were fulfilled in a wonderful way: from the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem to the cross on Golgotha, and then from Easter morning until the day of Pentecost. Throughout these stages of earthly pilgrimage, Mary realized ever more profoundly how "the Mighty One has done great things for me" (cf. Lk 1:49). In the Assumption all those "great things" (*magnalia Dei*) have been almost definitively crowned. Mary enters as the Spouse of the Holy Spirit into the house of humanity's supreme destiny. Her eternal dwelling is found in the dwelling of the Most Holy Trinity. And here, on earth, "all ages call her blessed" (cf. Lk 1:48).

And we also, this particular community of young people, proclaim Mary as blessed among women, thus giving the greatest honour to the only begotten Son of the Father, who became the blessed fruit of her womb. In fact, in him "we have all received adoption" (cf. Rom 8:15).

3. The liturgy of the solemnity of the Assumption cannot be exhausted here. It makes us look not only towards that "temple of God, which was opened in heaven" (cf. Rv 11:19), in which all the adopted children of God, together with the Mother of God, as "joint heirs with Christ" take part in the ineffable life of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is the definitive fullness of every truth and love. The Book of Revelation makes us look at the Assumption as a "great sign": "a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars" (Rv 12: 1). Therefore, this is the sign of the fulfilment, in view of all its cosmic dimensions: in this sign everything returns to God, who is the Creator, that is, the absolute beginning of all that exists, creation in all its manifold richness.

In this sign, one can see how man, who was created in the image and likeness of God, returns to God. We must all return in the same way, if we have received the adoption of the only begotten Son of God, who became for the sake of our adoption, the Son of Man: the Son of Mary.

Nevertheless, that all-inclusive return of the children to the Father, over the course of mankind's entire history on earth, is linked to a particular drama. Today's liturgy lays emphasis on this drama, through the words of the Letter of St Paul to the Corinthians: "Death came through a human being; ... in Adam all die" (I Cor 15:21-22). This death has a more profound dimension than that which is only biological death.

4. It is a death which strikes the spirit, depriving it of the life which comes from God himself. It is caused by sin, which is rebellion against God on the part of free and rational creatures. The drama goes back to the beginning when man, tempted by the Devil, wanted to attain his own fulfilment in an autonomous way. "You will be like gods who know what is good and what is bad", was the incitement whispered by the serpent (cf. Gn 3:5): that is, you will be able to decide for yourselves what is good and what is bad, independently from the source of truth and goodness, which is God himself.

This particular drama—the original drama—finds its symbolic expression in the magnificent picture presented to us by today's liturgy. Opposite the woman clothed with the sun, which is the symbol of the cosmos being transformed into the kingdom of the living God, another symbol appears, which is that of the Devil of the original drama. In Sacred Scripture he has different names. Here he is represented as a dragon who wants to devour the infant to whom the woman gives birth, the shepherd "of all nations" (cf. Rv 12:4-5).

Therefore, the last book of the New Testament confirms the first, i.e., Genesis: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers" (Gn 3:15). Human history is thus presented as a long sequence of conflicts and struggles between good and evil, between the eternal Father who loves the world to the point of giving his only begotten Son and the "father of lies", who is "a murderer from the beginning" (cf. Jn 8:44).

5. What does the "father of lies" struggle for? He struggles to deprive mankind of his adoptive sonship, to take away his inheritance which was given to him by the Father in Christ.

The struggle against the woman, who is the Virgin Mother of the Redeemer of the world, is against the one who is the sublime model of the Church (cf. *Lumen gentium*, n. 53).

The sign of the "woman" in the Book of Revelation points to the Mother of God and points to the Church. It points to all those who "are led by the Spirit of God", to those who together with Christ, as children of God, exclaim: "Abba, Father!"

Therefore, that sign also points to us. By exclaiming together with Christ, "Abba, Father", as adopted children, we participate in the paschal victory of the cross and the Resurrection, in which the Mother of God was the first to participate: Mary was assumed into heaven!

6. Dear friends, you have gathered here from so many places; you speak many different languages, you bring with you the patrimony of so many cultures, of so many historical experiences. In diverse ways, you and your different societies have experienced and are experiencing that struggle which throughout all of mankind's history has developed in man and for man.

Our century has been (and continues to be) a particular battleground of this struggle. Entire generations have been involved in this struggle, and today the true protagonists are each and every one of us. Man was truly created in the image and likeness of God—and at the same time, man was tempted to transform that image and likeness into a revolt by turning against his Creator and Redeemer. Man was tempted to reject God. He was tempted to shape his own destiny, here on earth, as "if God did not exist": as if God did not exist in all his transcendent reality; as if his love for mankind did not exist, the love which moved the Father "to give" his only begotten Son in order that mankind—through him—might have eternal life in God.

In such a struggle, in the succession of these spiritual conflicts, so many ways have been used to deprive individuals of their "adoption as children of God". You, young people, have come here on a pilgrimage to confirm this adoption as children of God, to choose it again; to model your life according to it; to approach and draw others to it.

May you be blessed!

May you be blessed with Mary, who believed in the fulfilment of the words which were spoken to her by the Lord.

May you be blessed! May the sign of a woman clothed with the sun walk with you, with each and every one of you, along every road of life. May this lead you to the fulfilment in God of your adoption as children in Christ.

Truly, the Lord has accomplished great things in you!

7. Concerning these "great things", my dear young people, you must be consistent and courageous witnesses in your surroundings, among your peers, in all of life's circumstances.

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Mary is beside you, the Virgin of Nazareth is docile to every inspiration of the Spirit: she who with her generous "yes" to God's plan, disclosed to the world the long-awaited prospect of salvation.

While looking at her—the humble handmaid of the Lord, today taken up into the glory of heaven—I say to you with St Paul: "Live by the Spirit" (Gal 5:16)! Let the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and fortitude, of knowledge, of piety and fear of the Lord (cf. Is 11:2) penetrate your heart and your life, and transform the face of the earth through you.

As the Bishop told you on the day of your Confirmation, I tell you again today, dear young people who have gathered here from every continent: Receive the Holy Spirit! Be renewed by the force which is sent forth by him, become builders of a new world: a different world, one which is founded on truth, justice, solidarity and love.

8. This Sixth World Day of Youth is marked by a special characteristic: it is the first time that such a great number of young people from Eastern Europe have participated.

How can one not recognize in this a great gift of the Holy Spirit? Along with you, I wish to thank the Holy Spirit today for this. After a long period of practically impassable borders, the Church in Europe can now breathe freely with both of her lungs.

Your presence, my dear young people of Eastern Europe, takes on particular significance. The universal Church needs the precious treasure of your Christian witness: a witness for which it was necessary at times to pay a very high price of suffering, in marginalization, persecution and even imprisonment.

9. Today, finally, your time has come!

The Church and the Successor of Peter have never forgotten about you during those harsh years of suffering. Here, at the Shrine of Jasna Góra, you can now offer the world a public demonstration of your belonging to Christ and your communion with the Church. Offer it in front of your peers who have come from every part of the globe and, in a special way, from the countries of Western Europe.

The old continent is counting on you, young people of Eastern and Western Europe, to build that "common house" from which a future of solidarity and peace is awaited. The Church is counting on you when she gathers at the next Extraordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, to reflect on the consequences of recent changes, and to prepare appropriate initiatives in order to develop more effective pastoral activity on this continent.

For the good of generations to come it is necessary that the new Europe should be based on those spiritual values which constitute the innermost core of its traditional culture.

10. A great joy fills my heart in seeing you together, young people from the East and West, North and South, united by the faith in Christ, who is "the same yesterday, today and forever" (Heb 13:8). You are the youth of the Church, which is ready to face the new millennium. You are the Church of tomorrow, the Church of hope!

Dear young people, you know through experience that the collapse of the ideology of Eastern European countries has left the feeling of a great vacuum in many of your companions, the impression of having been deceived, and a depressing anguish in the face of what is to come.

Even in Western European countries, a great many young people have lost their motivation for living. The drug phenomenon is a symptom of this profound sense of bewilderment. In the struggle for good, apathy in politics betrays in many people the sense of helplessness.

You are sent forth as messengers of the Good News of salvation for these brothers and sisters. They will discover the meaning of life by encountering Jesus Christ and in knowing their vocation to divine filiation through your joyful witness. In fact, the thirst for meaning is what they suffer from and Jesus Christ is the truth that sets us free.

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You will extend an invitation to all those who have been disappointed with the earthly tasks of civilization; together with you they will be creators of the "civilization of love". The Church's social teaching—which I recently recalled and confirmed in the Encyclical *Centesimus annus*—constitutes the grand programme.

Working generously for the construction of a society that is marked by the search for justice, harmony, solidarity and peace is an ideal which reveals to each person the riches of self-giving and service which he carries within himself.

Everyone will discover the beauty of life by promoting brotherhood among individuals and peoples, and by generously committing oneself to helping the poorest.

Dear friends, you are responsible for bearing this Gospel message which leads to eternal life, and at the same time shows us the way to live in a more fully human way on this earth. Much of what will be tomorrow depends on the commitment of today's Christian generation. Above all, it depends on your commitment, my dear young people, for soon you will have the responsibility of making decisions on which not only your own fate depends, but also that of many others.

Therefore, you are given the mission of assuring the presence of certain values for tomorrow's world, which are: full religious liberty, the respect for the personal dimension of development, defence of the right to life from the moment of conception until natural death, the promotion of the family, appreciation for the diversities which exist between cultures in order to promote reciprocal enrichment, the safeguarding of the ecological balance which is threatened by ever greater risks.

11. These are enormous tasks which require intrepid hearts, capable of "hoping against hope" (cf. Rom 4:18). My dear young people, you are not alone in this undertaking! At your side is Christ the Lord who said: "I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing!" (Lk 12:49). Here is what can strengthen your heart and encourage it to take on the most difficult tasks: the fire that Jesus brought, the fire of the Holy Spirit, which will burn away every human misery, every narrowminded egoism, every mean thought.

Let this fire blaze in your heart.

It is the Virgin Mary who, here in Czestochowa, has lit it in you.

Take this fire to every part of the globe.

May it never be extinguished by anyone or anything!

Look! Jasna Góra has been the Upper Room for you. Here is a new Pentecost: once again the Church is gathered together with Mary, a young, missionary Church, conscious of her mission. Receive the Holy Spirit and be strong! Amen!

**November 24, 1991**

MESSAGE

OF THE HOLY FATHER

POPE JOHN PAUL II

FOR THE VII WORLD YOUTH DAY

"Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel" (Mk 16:15)

Dear Young People,

1. In an extraordinary way the Lord blessed the Sixth World Youth Day which was celebrated last August at the shrine of Jasna Góra in Czestochowa. In announcing the theme for the next Day, my thoughts return to those wonderful moments and I thank divine Providence for the spiritual fruits which that world meeting brought not only to the Church, but to all humanity.

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How I want the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, which we experienced in Czestochowa, to spread everywhere! During those memorable days, Mary's shrine became the Upper Room for a new Pentecost, with the doors thrown open to the Third Millennium. Once again the world was able to see the Church, so young and so missionary, full of joy and hope.

I experienced great happiness in seeing so many young people, who gathered together for the first time from the East and West, from the North and South, united in prayer by the Holy Spirit. We witnessed a historical event, an event whose immeasurable meaning for salvation opened a new stage in the process of evangelization, in which young people have an active part to play.

Here we are before the Seventh World Youth Day, 1992. I chose these words of Christ as this year's theme: "Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel" (Mk 16:15). Through the Church, these words addressed to the Apostles concern every baptized person. As one can easily see, this theme is closely connected with last year's. The same Spirit who made us children of God compels us to evangelize. The Christian vocation, in fact, implies a mission.

In light of the missionary mandate which Christ has entrusted to us, the meaning and importance of World Youth Days in the Church appear with greater clarity. By participating in these gatherings, young people intend to confirm and strengthen their own "yes" to Christ and his Church, as they say again in the words of the prophet Isaiah: "Here I am; send me!" (cf. Is 6:8). This precisely was the meaning of the dismissal rite which took place in Czestochowa, when I handed lighted candles to some of your representatives and invited all young people to bring Christ's light to the world. Yes, in Jasna Góra — on Bright Mountain — the Holy Spirit enkindled a light which is a sign of hope for the Church and for all humanity.

2. By her very nature the Church is a missionary community (cf. *Ad gentes*, n. 2). She is continually impelled by this missionary thrust which she has received from the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8). In fact, the Holy Spirit is the principal agent of the Church's entire mission (cf. *Redemptoris missio*, III).

As a consequence, the Christian vocation is also directed towards the apostolate, towards evangelization, towards mission. All baptized persons are called by Christ to become his apostles in their own personal situation and in the world: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (Jn 20:21). Through his Church Christ entrusts you with the fundamental mission of sharing with others the gift of salvation, and he invites you to participate in building his kingdom. He chooses you, in spite of the personal limitations everyone has, because he loves you and believes in you. This unconditional love of Christ should be the very soul of your apostolic work, in accord with the words of St Paul: "The love of Christ impels us" (2 Cor 5:14).

Being disciples of Christ is not a private matter. On the contrary, the gift of faith must be shared with others. For this reason the same Apostle writes: "If I preach the Gospel, this is no reason for me to boast, for an obligation has been imposed on me, and woe to me if I do not preach it!" (1 Cor 9:16). Moreover, do not forget that faith is strengthened and grows precisely when it is given to others (cf. *Redemptoris missio*, n. 2).

"Go into the whole world"

3. The mission lands in which you have been called to work are not necessarily located in distant countries, but can be found throughout the world, even in the everyday situations where you are. In the countries of more ancient Christian tradition today there is an urgent need to call attention again to the message of Jesus by means of a new evangelization, since there are widespread groups of people who do not know Christ, or do not know him well enough; many, caught by the mechanisms of secularism and religious indifference, are far from him (cf. *Christifideles laici*, n. 4).

The same world of young people, dear friends, is a mission land for the Church today. Everyone knows the problems which plague the environment in which young people live: the collapse of values, doubt, consumerism, drugs, crime, eroticism, etc. But at the same time every young person has a great thirst for God, even if at times this thirst is hidden behind an attitude of indifference or even hostility. How many young people, lost and dissatisfied, went to Czestochowa to give a deeper and more decisive meaning to their

lives! How many came from a distance — not only in a geographical sense — although they were not baptized! I am sure that for many young people the meeting in Czestochowa was a form of pre-evangelization; for others it marked an essential turning-point, an occasion of genuine conversion.

The harvest is abundant! But, although there are many young people seeking Christ, there are still few apostles who are ready to proclaim him in a credible way. There is a need for many priests, teachers and educators in the faith, but there is also a need for young people inspired with a missionary spirit, because it is young people who "should become the first apostles of the young, in direct contact with them, exercising the apostolate by themselves among themselves" (*Apostolicam actuositatem*, n. 12). This is a basic principle of educating in faith. Here, then, is your great task!

Today's world offers many challenges to your involvement in the Church. In particular, the collapse of the Marxist system in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe and the subsequent opening of many countries to the proclamation of Christ are a new sign of the times to which the Church is called to give an appropriate response. In the same way the Church is searching for ways to overcome the different kinds of barriers which remain in many other countries. The effort and enthusiasm which you young people can offer the Church are indispensable.

"Proclaim the Gospel"

4. Proclaiming Christ means above all giving witness to him with one's life. It is the simplest form of preaching the Gospel and, at the same time, the most effective way available to you. It consists in showing the visible presence of Christ in one's own life by a daily commitment and by making every concrete decision in conformity with the Gospel. Today the world especially needs believable witnesses. Dear young people, you who love personal authenticity so much and who almost instinctively condemn every type of hypocrisy are able to give a clear and sincere witness to Christ.

Therefore, testify to your faith through your involvement in the world too. A disciple of Christ is never a passive and indifferent observer of what is taking place. On the contrary, he feels responsible for transforming social, political, economic and cultural reality.

Moreover, proclaiming means precisely proclaiming — becoming one who brings the Word of salvation to others. There is indeed much ignorance about the Christian faith, but there is also a deep desire to hear the Word of God. And faith comes from listening. St Paul writes: "And how can they believe unless they have heard of him?" (*Rom 10:14*). Dear young people, proclaiming the Word of God is not the responsibility of priests or religious alone, but it is yours too. You must have the courage to speak about Christ in your families and in places where you study, work or recreate, inspired with the same fervour the Apostles had when they said: "We cannot help speaking of what we have heard and seen" (*Acts 4:20*). Nor should you be silent! There are places and circumstances where you alone can bring the seed of God's Word.

Do not be afraid of presenting Christ to someone who does not yet know him. Christ is the true answer, the most complete answer to all the questions which concern the human person and his destiny. Without Christ the human person remains an unsolvable riddle. Therefore, have the courage to present Christ! Certainly, you must do this in a way which respects each person's freedom of conscience, but you must do it (cf. *Redemptoris missio*, n. 39). Helping a brother or sister to discover Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life (cf. *Jn 14:6*) is a true act of love for one's neighbour.

It is not an easy task to speak of God today. Many times one finds a wall of indifference and even a certain hostility. How many times will you be tempted to repeat with the prophet Jeremiah: "Ah, Lord God, I know not how to speak; I am too young"! But God will always answer: "Say not 'I am too young'. To whomever I send you, you shall go" (cf. *Jer 1:6-7*). So, do not be discouraged, because you are never alone. The Lord will not fail to accompany you, as he promised: "Know that I am with you always, until the end of the world" (*Mt 28:20*).

"Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel"

5. The theme of the Seventh World Youth Day also invites you to look at the history of peoples, particularly the history of their evangelization.

In some cases the history is very ancient, in others it is recent. But there is a wondrous dynamism with which the youngest Churches grow in the faith and enrich the spiritual patrimony of the whole universal Church.

On the occasion of this Day, dear young people throughout the world, I invite you to reflect in the light of faith on the figures of the apostles and missionaries who first raised the cross of Christ in your countries. Try to draw from their example the zeal and courage to face up better to the challenges of our time.

With gratitude for the gift of faith which they brought to people, may you take personal responsibility for the heritage of Christ's cross, which you are called to pass on to future generations.

At this point I want to offer special encouragement to the young people of the Latin American continent, where the Fifth Centenary of its first evangelization is being celebrated this year. This event, which is very important for the whole Church, is an occasion for you to thank the Lord for the faith he has given you and to renew your commitment to meet the challenges presented by the new evangelization on the threshold of the Third Millennium.

6. With the publication of this Message a journey of spiritual preparation is being started for the upcoming World Youth Day, which will gather you together around your Bishops on Palm Sunday.

The ordinary character of the celebration, however, should not mean less involvement. On the contrary, I invite you young people, and those who are involved in youth work, as well as those responsible for movements, associations and ecclesial communities, to intensify your efforts so that this journey will become a true school of evangelization and apostolic formation.

I hope that many young men and women, inspired by sincere, apostolic zeal, will consecrate their own lives to Christ and the Church as priests and religious, or as lay people who are also ready to leave their own countries to rush to those places where workers in Christ's vineyard are scarce. Listen attentively, then, to the voice of the Lord, who today does not cease calling you, as he called Peter and Andrew: "Come after me and I will make you fishers of men" (Mt 4:19).

As the year 2000 approaches, the Church feels the need for a renewed missionary effort and she puts her hope in you, dear young people, precisely for this task. Do not forget to thank the Holy Spirit each day for continuing to light so many fires of apostolic commitment in the Church today. Parish communities that are dynamic and alive are its very fertile field, as well as associations, ecclesial movements and new communities which are increasing and spreading with such an abundance of charisms, especially in young people's surroundings. This is the new inspiration which the Holy Spirit is giving to our times: how I wish that it would penetrate each of your lives!

I entrust the celebration of World Youth Day 1992 to Mary, Queen of Apostles. May she teach you that to bring Jesus to others it is not necessary to do extraordinary feats, but simply to have a heart filled with love for God and one's brothers and sisters, a love which impels one to share the priceless treasures of faith, hope and charity.

In the course of preparing for the Seventh World Youth Day, dear young people, may my special Apostolic Blessing accompany you.

From the Vatican, 24 November 1991, the Solemnity of Jesus Christ the King.

# 1992

April 12, 1992

7TH WORLD YOUTH DAY – ROME

Pope John Paul II: Everyone baptized is an apostle

Homily of the Palm Sunday Liturgy, 12 April 1992

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1. "I will tell of your name to my brethren" (Ps 22 [21]:22).

On this day the words of the Psalm are fulfilled. All Jerusalem resounds with the glory of the name of God—the name of God, the One who brought his people out of the land of Egypt, from slavery.

This people awaits the new coming of God. In Jesus of Nazareth it finds the confirmation of its expectations. When Christ draws near to Jerusalem, going up as a pilgrim with the others for the feast of the Passover, he is welcomed as he who comes in the name of the Lord. Exultantly the people sing "Hosanna".

Everyone had read exactly the signs in which the Prophets' tidings were fulfilled. Even the sign of the king who would arrive "riding on an ass" (cf. Zec 9:9) had been foretold.

2. But the insight shared by the crowd has its limits. He who, in the words of the Psalmist, comes "to tell of God's name to his brethren" is, at the same time—in the Psalm—the one who is forsaken, mocked, chastised.

"All who see me mock at me,  
they make mouths at me, they wag their heads;  
'He committed his cause to the Lord, let him deliver him,  
let him rescue him, for he delights in him!'" (Ps 22 [21]:7-8).  
And he says of himself, as if speaking to himself:  
"They have pierced my hands and feet  
—I can count all my bones...  
they divide my garments among them,  
and for my raiment they cast lots.  
But you, O Lord, be not far off!  
O you, my help, hasten to my aid!" (Ps 22 [21]:16-19).  
My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (ibid., 2).

Astonishing prophecy! Through these words we are already present at Golgotha, sharing in Christ's agony on the cross. These very words of the Psalmist will be on his lips in the hour of his agony.

Christ, who came to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover, completely understood the truth contained in the psalms and the Prophets. This was the truth about himself. He came to fulfil this truth to the utmost.

3. Through what happens on Palm Sunday there is opened for us a way to look upon the events shortly to follow, when this full truth about the Christ-Messiah will be made complete.

He who, "though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant... humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name... Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2:6-9, 11).

4. This is the Truth of God contained in the events of this Holy Week of Passover. These events have a human dimension. They belong to human history. But this man "truly... was the Son of God" (Mt 27:54). The human events reveal the inscrutable mystery of God. This is the mystery of the Love that saves.

When Christ, after his resurrection, says to the Apostles: "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel" (Mk 16:15)—in that moment he will give them the command to preach this very mystery, the fulness of which was achieved in the events of the Passover in Jerusalem.

5. These same words of the Redeemer of the world are addressed today to all the young people of Rome and of the whole Church. They become the guiding principle of this year's World Youth Day.

Dear young people, you must accept the saving truth of the Gospel, just as once the sons and daughters of the Holy City accepted the truth about the Son of David "who comes in the name of the Lord". Today you must

accept this saving truth about Christ crucified and risen and, living it profoundly, strive to reach the heart of the world of our day.

"Go into all the world and preach the Gospel" (Mk 16:15): this is the charge which comes to you from Christ himself. You have reflected and prayed about this commitment, which is the theme of the Seventh World Youth Day. It is a commitment which involves each of you personally. Everyone who has been baptized is called by Christ to become an apostle in his or her own surroundings and in the world.

What will your answer be?

May each of you make his own the words of the Psalmist:

"I will tell of your name to my brethren

Your name!

In no other name under heaven is there salvation (cf. Acts 4:12).

**August 15, 1992**

MESSAGE

OF THE HOLY FATHER

POPE JOHN PAUL II

FOR THE VIII WORLD YOUTH DAY

"I came that they might have life, and have it to the full" (Jn 10:10).

Dear Young People,

1. Following our meetings in Rome, Buenos Aires, Santiago de Compostela and Czestochowa, our pilgrimage through contemporary history continues. The next stop will be in Denver, in the heart of the United States, in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado, where in August 1993 the Eighth World Youth Day will be celebrated. Together with many young Americans, young people from every nation will gather together, as on previous occasions, as if to symbolize the living faith, or at least the most urgent questionings of the world of youth from the five continents.

These regular celebrations are not meant to be mere rituals, justified merely by the fact that they are repeated; in fact, they spring from a deep-seated need originating in the human heart and reflected in the life of the pilgrim and missionary Church.

The World Youth Days and Gatherings are providential opportunities to break our journey for a while: they enable young people to examine their deepest aspirations, to heighten their sense of belonging to the Church, to proclaim their common faith in the crucified and risen Christ with increasing joy and courage. They provide an opportunity for many young people to make bold and enlightened choices which can help steer the future course of history under the powerful but gentle guidance of the Holy Spirit.

We are witnessing a "succession of empires" in our world — the repeated attempts to create political unity which particular individuals have tried to impose on others. The results are there for all to see. True and lasting unity cannot be created by coercion and violence. It can be achieved only by building on the foundations of a common heritage of values accepted and shared by all, values such as respect for the dignity of the human person, a willingness to welcome life, the defence of human rights, and openness to transcendence and the realm of the spirit.

In view of this, and as a response to the challenges of our changing times, the World Youth Gathering is meant to be a first step and a proposal of a new unity, a unity which transcends the political order but enlightens it. It is based on awareness that only the Creator of the human heart can adequately satisfy its deepest yearnings. World Youth Day is thus a proclamation of Christ who says to the men and women of our own century too: "I came that they might have life, and have it to the full" (Jn 10:10).

2. And so we come to the heart of the theme that will guide our reflections throughout this year of preparation for the next World Youth Day.

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Different languages have different words to express what no one would ever wish to lose under any circumstances, what constitutes the expectation, longing and hope of all mankind. But there is no better word than "life" to sum up comprehensively the greatest aspiration of all humanity. "Life" indicates the sum total of all the goods that people desire, and at the same time what makes them possible, obtainable and lasting.

Is not the history of mankind deeply marked by a frantic and tragic search for something or someone able to free it from death and guarantee life?

Human existence has its moments of crisis and weariness, despondency and gloom. Such a sense of dissatisfaction is clearly reflected in much of today's literature and films. In the light of this distress, it is easier to understand the particular difficulties of adolescents and young people stepping out with uncertainty to encounter all the fascinating promises and dark uncertainties which are part of life.

Jesus came to provide the ultimate answer to the yearning for life and for the infinite which his Heavenly Father had poured into our hearts when he created us. At the climax of revelation, the incarnate Word proclaims, "I am the Life" (Jn 14:6), and "I came that they might have life" (Jn 10:10). But what life? Jesus' intention was clear: the very life of God, which surpasses all the possible aspirations of the human heart (cf. 1 Cor 2:9). The fact is that through the grace of Baptism we are already God's children (cf. 1 Jn 3:1-2).

Jesus came to meet men and women, to heal the sick and the suffering, to free those possessed by devils and to raise the dead: he gave himself on the cross and rose again from the dead, revealing that he is the Lord of life: the author and the source of life without end.

3. Our daily experience tells us that life is marked by sin and threatened by death, despite the desire for good which beats in our hearts and the desire for life which courses through our veins. However little heed we pay to ourselves and to the frustrations which life brings us, we discover that everything within us impels us to transcend ourselves, urges us to overcome the temptation of superficiality or despair. It is then that human beings are called to become disciples of that other One who infinitely transcends them, in order to enter at last into true life.

There are also false prophets and false teachers of how to live. First of all there are those who teach people to leave the body, time and space in order to be able to enter into what they call "true life". They condemn creation, and in the name of deceptive spirituality they lead thousands of young people along the paths of an impossible liberation which eventually leaves them even more isolated, victims of their own illusions and of the evil in their own lives.

Seemingly at the opposite extreme, there are the teachers of the "fleeting moment", who invite people to give free rein to every instinctive urge or longing, with the result that individuals fall prey to a sense of anguish and anxiety leading them to seek refuge in false, artificial paradises, such as that of drugs.

There are also those who teach that the meaning of life lies solely in the quest for success, the accumulation of wealth, the development of personal abilities, without regard for the needs of others or respect for values, at times not even for the fundamental value of life itself.

These and other kinds of false teachers of life, also numerous in the modern world, propose goals which not only fail to bring satisfaction but often intensify and exacerbate the thirst that burns in the human heart.

Who then can understand and satisfy our expectations?

Who but the One who is the Author of Life can satisfy the expectations that he himself has placed in our hearts? He draws close to each and every one of us in order to announce a hope that will never disappoint; he who is both the way and the life: the pathway into life.

Left to ourselves, we could never achieve the ends for which we have been created. Within us there is a promise which we find we are incapable of attaining. But the Son of God who came among us has given his personal assurance: "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life" (Jn 14:6). As Saint Augustine so strikingly phrased it, Christ "wishes to create a place in which it is possible for all people to find true life". This

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"place" is his Body and his Spirit, in which the whole of human life, redeemed and forgiven, is renewed and made divine.

4. In fact, the life of each of us was thought of and willed by God before the world began, and we can rightly repeat with the Psalmist: "O Lord, you have probed me and you know me... truly you have formed my inmost being; you knit me in my mother's womb" (Ps 139).

This life, which was in God from the beginning (cf. Jn 1:4), is a life which is freely given, which holds nothing back for itself and is freely and unstintingly communicated to others. It is light, "the real light, which gives light to every man" (Jn 1:9). It is God, who came to make his dwelling among us (cf. Jn 1:14), to show us the path to the immortality belonging to the children of God, and to make it accessible to us.

In the mystery of his cross and resurrection, Christ has destroyed death and sin, and has bridged the infinite distance that separates all people from new life in him. "I am the resurrection and the life", he proclaims. "Whoever believes in me, though he should die, will come to life, and whoever is alive and believes in me will never die" (Jn 11:25).

Christ achieves all this by pouring out his Spirit, the giver of life, in the sacraments; especially in Baptism, the sacrament by which the fragile life which we receive from our parents and which is destined to end in death becomes instead a path to eternity; in the sacrament of Penance which continually renews God's life within us by the forgiveness of sins; and in the Eucharist, the "bread of life" (cf. Jn 6:34), which feeds the "living" and gives strength to their steps during their pilgrimage on earth, so that they can say with the Apostle Paul: "I still live my human life, but it is a life of faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me".

5. New life, the gift of the risen Lord, then spreads far and wide, flowing into every sphere of human experience: the family, the school, the workplace, everyday activities and leisure time.

That new life begins to flower here and now. The sign of its presence and growth is love. As Saint John tells us: "That we have passed from death to life we know because we love the brothers" (1 Jn 3:14) with a true love that is put into practice. Life flourishes in the gift of self to others, in accordance with each person's vocation — in the ministerial priesthood, in consecrated virginity, in marriage — so that all can share the gifts they have received, in a spirit of solidarity, especially with the poor and the needy.

The person who is "begotten from above" thus becomes able to "see the kingdom" of God (cf. Jn 3:3), and to take part in building up social structures more worthy of every individual and of all humanity, in promoting and defending the culture of life against all threats of death.

6. Dear young people, you ask a question that many of your friends often put to you: how and where can we come to know this life? How and where can we live it?

You can find the answer by yourselves, if you really try to live faithfully in the love of Christ (cf. Jn 15:9). Then you will personally experience the truth of those words of his: "I am ... the life" (Jn 14:6) and you will be able to bring this joyful message of hope to everyone. Christ has made you his ambassadors, the primary evangelizers of your contemporaries.

The next World Youth Day in Denver will give us an ideal opportunity to reflect together on this theme of great interest to everyone. We must therefore prepare for this important meeting, first of all by looking around us to discover and, make a list, as it were, of all the "places" where Christ is present as the source of life. They may be our parish communities, apostolic groups and movements, monasteries, convents and religious houses, but also the individual persons through whom — as the disciples at Emmaus experienced — Christ is able to touch hearts and open them up to hope.

Dear young people, with a spirit of generous self-giving, recognize that you are directly involved in the new evangelization, which demands the involvement of all of us. Proclaim Christ, who "died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who for their sakes died and was raised up" (2 Cor 5:15).

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7. You, dear young people of the United States who will be the hosts of the next World Youth Day, have been given the joy of welcoming as a gift of the Spirit this meeting with the many young men and women who will come to your country on pilgrimage from all over the world.

You are already making fervent spiritual and material preparations for this event, which involves each member of your ecclesial communities.

It is my earnest hope that this extraordinary event will bring you ever greater enthusiasm and fidelity in following Christ and in joyfully welcoming his message, the source of new life.

I therefore entrust all of you to the Blessed Virgin Mary, through whom we have been given the Author of Life, Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our Lord. With great affection I send all of you my blessing.

From the Vatican, on 15 August 1992, the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

# 1993

August 14, 1993

CHRIST ALONE GIVES THE FULLNESS OF DIVINE LIFE

Pope John Paul II

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The celebration proper of World Youth Day began on Saturday evening, 14 August, with a Prayer Vigil in Cherry Creek State Park. The service was marked by Scripture readings, prayers, hymns and testimonies by young people from various nations. At three different moments of the celebration the Pope addressed the young people on themes suggested by the Scripture, focusing his remarks on Christ's words "I came that they might have life, and have it abundantly". The Holy Father spoke mainly in English, with occasional passages in Spanish, French and Italian.

## First Part

Dear Young People, Young Pilgrims on the path of Life:

"I came that they might have life, and have it abundantly" (Jn 10:10).

1. This evening these words of Christ are addressed to you, young people gathered for the World Youth Day.

Jesus speaks these words in the parable of the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd: what a beautiful image of God! It transmits something deep and personal about the way God cares for all that he has made. In the modern metropolis it is not likely that you will see a shepherd guarding his flock. But we can go back to the traditions of the Old Testament, in which the parable is deeply rooted, in order to understand the loving care of the Shepherd for his sheep.

The Psalm says: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want" (Ps 23:1). The Lord, the Shepherd, is God-Yahweh. The One who freed his people from oppression in the land of their exile. The One who revealed himself on Mount Sinai as the God of the covenant: "If you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine" (Ex 19:5).

God is the Creator of all that exists. On the earth which he created he placed man and woman: "male and female he created them" (Gen 1:27). "And God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over ... every living thing that moves upon the earth'" (ibid., v. 28).

2. The special place of human beings in all that God made lies in their being given a share in God's own concern and providence for the whole of creation. The Creator has entrusted the world to us, as a gift and as a responsibility. He who is eternal Providence, the One who guides the entire universe towards its final

destiny, made us in his image and likeness, so that we too should become "providence"—a wise and intelligent providence, guiding human development and the development of the world along the path of harmony with the Creator's will, and the well-being of the human family and the fulfillment of each individual's transcendent calling.

3. Yet millions of men and women live without giving a thought to what they do or to what will come later. Here, this evening, in Denver's Cherry Creek State Park, you represent the young people of the world, with all the questions which young people at the end of the 20th century need to ask themselves, and rightly so.

Our theme is life, and life is full of mystery. Science and technology have made great progress in discovering the secrets of our natural life, however even a superficial look at our personal experience shows that there are many other dimensions to individual and collective life on this planet. Our restless hearts seek beyond our limits, challenging our capacity to think and love: to think and love the immeasurable, the infinite, the absolute and supreme form of Being. Our inner eye looks upon the unlimited horizons of our hopes and aspirations. And in the midst of all life's contradictions, we seek the true meaning of life. We wonder and we ask ourselves "why?".

Why am I here?  
Why do I exist?  
What must I do?

We all ask ourselves these questions. Humanity in its entirety feels the pressing need to give meaning and purpose to a world in which being happy is increasingly difficult and complex. The Bishops of the whole world gathered at the Second Vatican Council expressed it as follows: "In the face of modern developments there is a growing body of people who are asking the most fundamental of all questions or are glimpsing them with a keener insight: What is man? What is the meaning of suffering, evil, death, which have not been eliminated by all this progress?... What can man contribute to society? What can he expect from it? What happens after this earthly life is ended?" (*Gaudium et spes*, n. 10).

Failure to ask these basic questions means renouncing the great adventure of seeking the truth about life.

4. You know how easy it is to avoid the fundamental questions. But your presence here shows that you will not hide from reality and from responsibility!

You care about the gift of life that God has given you. You have confidence in Christ when he says: "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (Jn 10:10).

Our Vigil begins with an act of trust in the words of the Good Shepherd. In Jesus Christ, the Father expresses the whole truth concerning creation. We believe that in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus the Father reveals all his love for humanity. That is why Christ calls himself "the sheepgate" (Jn 10:7). As the gate, he stands guard over the creatures entrusted to him. He leads them to the good pastures: "I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be safe. He will go in and out, and find pasture" (Jn 10:9).

Jesus Christ is truly the world's Shepherd. Our hearts must be open to his words. For this we have come to the World Meeting of Youth: from every state and Diocese in the United States, from all over the Americas, from every continent: all represented here by the flags which your delegates have set up to show that no one here this evening is a stranger. We are all one in Christ. The Lord has led us as he leads the flock:

The Lord is our Shepherd; we shall not want. In green pastures he makes us find rest. Beside restful waters he leads us; He refreshes our souls. Even though we walk in a dark valley we fear no evil; for he is at our side. He gives us courage (cf. Ps 23).

As we reflect together on the Life which Jesus gives, I ask you to have the courage to commit yourselves to the truth. Have the courage to believe the Good News about Life which Jesus teaches in the Gospel. Open your minds and hearts to the beauty of all that God has made and to his special, personal love for each one of you.

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Young people of the world, hear his voice!

Hear his voice and follow him!

Only the Good Shepherd will lead you to the full truth about Life.

Second Part

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1. At this point the young people gathered in Denver may ask: what is the Pope going to say about Life?

My words will be a profession of the faith of Peter, the first Pope. My message can be none other than what has been handed on from the beginning, because it is not mine by the Good News of Jesus Christ himself.

The New Testament presents Simon—whom Jesus called Peter, the Rock—as a vigorous, passionate disciple of Christ. But he also doubted and, at a decisive moment, he even denied that he was a follower of Jesus. Yet, despite these human weaknesses, Peter was the first disciple to make a full public profession of faith in the Master. One day Jesus asked: "Who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered: "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God" (Mt 16:16).

Beginning with Peter, the first apostolic witness, multitudes of witnesses, men and women, young and old, of every nation on earth, have proclaimed their faith in Jesus Christ, true God and true man, the Redeemer of man, the Lord of history, the Prince of Peace. Like Peter, they asked: "To whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (Jn 6:68).

This evening we profess the same faith as Peter. We believe that Jesus Christ has the words of Life, and that he speaks those words to the Church, to all who open their minds and hearts to him with faith and trust.

2. "I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (Jn 10:11). Our first reflection is inspired by these words of Jesus in the Gospel of Saint John.

The Good Shepherd lays down his life. Death assails Life.

At the level of our human experience, death is the enemy of life. It is an intruder who frustrates our natural desire to live. This is especially obvious in the case of untimely or violent death, and most of all in the case of the killing of the innocent.

It is not surprising then that among the Ten Commandments the Lord of Life, the God of the Covenant, should have said on Mount Sinai, "You shall not kill" (Ex 20:13; cf. Mt 5:21).

The words "you shall not kill" were engraved on the tablets of the covenant—on the stone tablets of the law. But, even before that, this law was engraved on the human heart, in the sanctuary of every individual's conscience. In the Bible, the first to experience the force of this law was Cain, who murdered his brother Abel. Immediately after his terrible crime, he felt the whole weight of having broken the commandment not to kill. Even though he tried to escape from the truth, saying: "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen 4:9), the inner voice repeated over and over: "You are a murderer." The voice was his conscience, and it could not be silenced.

3. With time the threats against life have not grown weaker. They are taking on vast proportions. They are not only threats coming from the outside, from the forces of nature or the "Cains" who kill the "Abels"; no, they are scientifically and systematically programmed threats. The 20th century will have been an era of massive attacks on life, an endless series of wars and a continual taking of innocent human life. False prophets and false teachers have had the greatest success.

In the same way, false models of progress have led to a threat against the earth's ecological balance. Man—made in the image and likeness of the Creator—is called to be the good shepherd of the

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environment, the context of his existence and life. This is the task he was given long ago and which the human family has assumed not without success throughout its history, until recently when man himself has become the destroyer of his natural environment. This has already occurred in some places, where it is still going on.

However, there is still more. We are also witnessing the spread of a mentality which militates against life—an attitude of hostility towards life in the mother's womb and life in its last phases. At the very time that science and medicine are increasingly able to safeguard health and life, threats against life are becoming more insidious. Abortion and euthanasia—the actual taking of a real human life—are claimed as "rights and solutions to "problems," problems of individuals or those of society. The killing of the innocent is no less sinful an act or less destructive because it is done in a legal and scientific manner. In modern metropolises, life—God's first gift and a fundamental right of each individual, the basis of all other rights—is often treated more or less as a commodity to be controlled, marketed and manipulated at will.

All this takes place although Christ, the Good Shepherd, wants us to have life. He knows what threatens life; he knows how to recognize the wolf who comes to snatch and scatter the sheep. He can identify those who try to enter the sheepfold but who are really thieves and hirelings (cf. Jn 10:1, 13). He knows how many young people are wasting their lives, shirking their responsibility and living in falsehood. Drugs, the abuse of alcohol, pornography and sexual disorder, violence: these are some of the grave problems which need to be seriously addressed by the whole of society, in every nation and at the international level. However, they are also personal tragedies, which must be faced with concrete interpersonal acts of love and solidarity through a great renewal of one's personal responsibility before God, before others and before one's own conscience. We are our brothers' keepers! (cf. Gen 4:9).

## II

4. Why do the consciences of young people not rebel against this situation, especially against the moral evil which flows from personal choices? Why do so many acquiesce in attitudes and behavior which offend human dignity and disfigure the image of God in us? The normal thing would be for conscience to point out the mortal danger to the individual and to humanity contained in the easy acceptance of evil and sin. Is it because conscience itself is losing the ability to distinguish good from evil?

In a technological culture in which people are used to dominating matter, discovering its laws and mechanisms in order to transform it according to their wishes, the danger arises of also wanting to manipulate conscience and its demands. In a culture which holds that no universally valid truths are possible, nothing is absolute. Therefore, in the end—they say—objective goodness and evil no longer really matter. Good comes to mean what is pleasing or useful at a particular moment. Evil means what contradicts our subjective wishes. Each person can build a private system of values.

5. Young people, do not give in to this widespread false morality. Do not stifle your conscience! Conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of a person, where we are alone with God (cf. *Gaudium et spes*, n. 16). "In the depths of his conscience man detects a law which he does not impose upon himself, but which holds him to obedience" (ibid.). That law is not an external human law, but the voice of God, calling us to free ourselves from the grip of evil desires and sin, and stimulating us to seek what is good and true. Only by listening to the voice of God in your most intimate being, and by acting in accordance with its directions, will you reach the freedom you yearn for. As Jesus said, only the truth will make you free (cf. Jn 8:32). And the truth is not the fruit of each individual's imagination. God gave you intelligence to know the truth, and your will to achieve what is morally good. He has given you the light of conscience to guide your moral decisions, to love good and avoid evil. Moral truth is objective, and a properly formed conscience can perceive it.

But if conscience itself has been corrupted, how can it be restored? If conscience—which is light—no longer enlightens, how can we overcome the moral darkness? Jesus says: "The eye is the body's lamp. If your eyes are good, your body will be filled with light; if your eyes are bad, your body will be in darkness. And if your light is darkness, how deep will the darkness be!" (Mt 6:22-23).



But Jesus also says: "I am the light of the world. No follower of mine shall ever walk in darkness; no, he shall possess the light of life" (Jn 8:12). If you follow Christ you will restore conscience to its rightful place and proper role, and you will be the light of the world, the salt of the earth (cf. Mt 5:13).

A rebirth of conscience must come from two sources: first, the effort to know objective truth with certainty, including the truth about God; and secondly, the light of faith in Jesus Christ, who alone has the words of life.

6. Against the splendid setting of the mountains of Colorado, with its pure air which gives peace and serenity to nature, the soul spontaneously is lifted up to sing the Creator's praise: "O Lord, our Lord, how glorious is your name over all the earth!" (Ps 8:2).

Young pilgrims, the visible world is like a map pointing to heaven, the eternal dwelling of the living God. We learn to see the Creator by contemplating the beauty of his creatures. In this world the goodness, wisdom and almighty power of God shine forth. And the human intellect, after original sin, too—in what has not been darkened by error or passion—can discover the Artist's hand in the wonderful works which he has made. Reason can know God through the book of nature: a personal God who is infinitely good, wise, powerful and eternal, who transcends the world and, at the same time, is present in the depths of his creatures. St. Paul writes: "Ever since the creation of the world, his invisible attributes of eternal power and divinity have been able to be understood and perceived in what he has made" (Rom 1:20).

Jesus teaches us to see the Father's hand in the beauty of the lilies of the field, the birds of the air, the starry night, fields ripe for the harvest, the faces of children and the needs of the poor and humble. If you look at the world with a pure heart, you too will see the face of God (cf. Mt 5:8), because it reveals the mystery of the Father's provident love.

Young people are especially sensitive to the beauty of nature, and contemplating it inspires them spiritually. However, it must be a genuine contemplation; a contemplation which fails to reveal the face of a personal, intelligent, free and loving Father, but which discerns merely the dim figure of an impersonal divinity or some cosmic force, does not suffice. We must not confuse the Creator with his creation.

The creature does not have life of himself, but from God. In discovering God's greatness, man discovers the unique position he holds in the visible world: "You have made him little less than the angels, and crowned him with glory and honour. You have given him rule over the works of your hands, putting all things under his feet" (Ps 8:6-7). Yes, the contemplation of nature reveals not only the Creator, but also the human being's role in the world which he created. With faith it reveals the greatness of our dignity as creatures created in his image.

In order to have life and have it abundantly, in order to re-establish the original harmony of creation, we must respect this divine image in all of creation, especially in human life itself.

7. When the light of faith penetrates this natural consciousness we reach a new certainty. The words of Christ ring out with utter truth: "I came that they might have life, and have it abundantly."

Against all the forces of death, in spite of all the false teachers, Jesus Christ continues to offer humanity the only true and realistic hope. He is the world's true Shepherd. This is because he and the Father are one (cf. Jn 17:22). In his divinity he is one with the Father; in his humanity he is one with us.

Because he took upon himself our human condition, Jesus Christ is able to communicate to all those who are united with him in Baptism the Life that he has in himself. And because in the Trinity, Life is Love, the very love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us (cf. Rom 5:5). Life and love are inseparable: the love of God for us, and the love we give in return—love of God and love of every brother and sister. This will be the theme of the last part of our reflection later this evening.

Third Part

Dear young pilgrims,

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1. The Spirit has led you to Denver to fill you with new Life: to give you a stronger faith and hope and love. Everything in you—your mind and heart, will and freedom, gifts and talents—everything is being taken up by the Holy Spirit in order to make you "living stones" of the "spiritual house" which is the Church (cf. 1 Pet 2:5). This Church is inseparable from Jesus; he loves her as the Bridegroom loves the Bride. This Church today, in the United States and in all the other countries from which you come, needs the affection and cooperation of her young people, the hope of her future. In the Church each one has a role to play, and all together we build up the one Body of Christ, the one People of God.

As the third millennium approaches, the Church knows that the Good Shepherd continues, as always, to be the sure hope of humanity. Jesus Christ never ceases to be the "sheepgate." And despite the history of humanity's sins against life, he never ceases to repeat with the same vigour and love: "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (Jn 10:10).

2. How is this possible? How can Christ give us Life if death forms part of our earthly existence? How is it possible if "it is appointed that human beings die once, and after this the judgment" (Heb 9:27)?

Jesus himself provides the answer—and the answer is a supreme declaration of divine Love, a high-point of the Gospel revelation concerning God the Father's love for all of creation. The answer is already present in the parable of the Good Shepherd. Christ says: "The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (Jn 10:11).

Christ—the Good Shepherd—is present among us, among the peoples, nations, generations and races, as the One who "lays down his life for the sheep." What is this but the greatest love? It was the death of the innocent One: "The Son of Man is departing, as Scripture says of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed" (Mt 26:24). Christ on the Cross stands as a sign of contradiction to every crime against the commandment not to kill. He offered his own life in sacrifice for the salvation of the world. No one takes that human life from him, but he lays it down of his own accord. He has the power to lay it down and the power to take it up again (cf. Jn 10:18). It was a true self-giving. It was a sublime act of freedom.

Yes, the Good Shepherd lays down his life. But only to take it up again (cf. Jn 10:17). And in the new life of the resurrection, he has become—in the words of Saint Paul—"a life-giving spirit" (1 Cor 15:45), who can now bestow the gift of Life on all who believe in him.

Life laid down—Life taken up again—Life given. In him, we have that Life which he has in the unity of the Father and of the Holy Spirit. If we believe in him. If we are one with him through love, remembering that "whoever loves God must also love his brother" (1 Jn 4:21).

3. Good Shepherd:

The Father loves you because you lay down your life. The Father loves you as the crucified Son because you go to your death giving your life for us. And the Father loves you when you conquer death by your resurrection, revealing an indestructible life. You are the Life and, therefore, the Way and the Truth of our life (cf. Jn 14:6).

You said: "I am the Good Shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father" (Jn 10:14-15). You who know the Father (cf. Jn 10:15)—the only Father of all—know why the Father loves you (cf. Jn 10:17). He loves you because you give your life for each one. When you say: "I lay down my life for my sheep," you are excluding no one. You came into the world to embrace all people and to gather as one all the children of the whole human family who were scattered (cf. Jn 11:52). Nonetheless, there are many who do not know you. "However, I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. These also I must lead" (Jn 10:16).

4. Good Shepherd,

Teach the young people gathered here, teach the young people of the world, the meaning of "laying down" their lives through vocation and mission. Just as you sent the Apostles to preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth, so now challenge the youth of the Church to carry on the vast mission of making you known to all

those who have not yet heard of you! Give these young people the courage and generosity of the great missionaries of the past so that, through the witness of their faith and their solidarity with every brother and sister in need, the world may discover the Truth, the Goodness and the Beauty of the Life you alone can give.

Teach the young people gathered in Denver to take your message of life and truth, of love and solidarity, to the heart of the modern metropolis—to the heart of all the problems which afflict the human family at the end of the 20th century.

Teach these young people the proper use of their freedom. Teach them that the greatest freedom is the fullest giving of themselves. Teach them the meaning of the Gospel words: "He who loses his life for my sake will find it" (Mt 10:39).

5. For all of this, Good Shepherd, we love you.

The young people gathered in Denver love you because they love life, the gift of the Creator. They love their human life as the path through this created world. They love life as a task and a vocation.

And they love that other Life which, through you, the Eternal Father has given us: the Life of God in us, the greatest gift to us.

You are the Good Shepherd!

And there is none other.

You have come that we may have Life—and that we may have it abundantly. Life, not only on the human level, but in the measure of the Son—the Son in whom the Father is eternally pleased.

Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you for having said: "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (Jn 10:10). The young people of the Eighth World Youth Day thank you from their hearts.

Maranatha!

Here, from Cherry Creek State Park in Denver, from this gathering of young people from all over the world, we cry out:

Maranatha! "Come Lord Jesus" (Rev 22:20).

**August 15, 1993**

8TH WORLD YOUTH DAY – DENVER

Pope John Paul II: Christ alone gives fullness of life

Homily for Solemnity of the Assumption, 15 August 1993

Good Morning. Today is a great holy day, a great Solemnity of the Assumption of our Mother, of our Lady. She embraces all of us in her Assumption. This is the meaning of the words of Jesus, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly". This means that our Lady in her Assumption has the fullness of life for her and for all of us. We are participating in this same life, which is her life, our Mother, our Lady, the Virgin Mary. So in the name of Jesus and of his Mother, I say again, "Good Morning!".

We hope that you will accompany us in this great Solemnity of the Assumption through your artistic execution: through your singing and music—through this artistic beauty. Beauty is an aspect of life, of the fullness of life: God is the highest beauty; Jesus, his Mother are the highest beauty. We shall participate through this artistic beauty (of music and singing) in the supernatural, in the transcendent beauty of God, of the Most Holy Trinity, of Jesus, of his Mother on the feast of her Solemnity of the Assumption. God bless you, my dear brothers and sisters,

After the Gospel the Holy Father gave the following homily in English.

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"God who is mighty has done great things for me" (Lk 1:49).

Beloved Young People and Dear Friends in Christ,

1. Today the Church finds herself, with Mary, on the threshold of the house of Zechariah in Ain-Karim. With new life stirring within her, the Virgin of Nazareth hastened there, immediately after the Fiat of the Annunciation, to be of help to her cousin Elizabeth. It was Elizabeth who first recognized the "great things" which God was doing in Mary. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth marvelled that the mother of her Lord should come to her (cf. Lk 1:43). With deep insight into the mystery, she declared: "Blest is she who believed that the Lord's words to her would be fulfilled" (Lk 1:45). With her soul full of humble gratitude to God, Mary replied with a hymn of praise: "God who is mighty has done great things for me and holy is his name" (Lk 1:49).

On this feast the Church celebrates the culmination of the "great things" which God has done in Mary: her glorious Assumption into heaven. And throughout the Church the same hymn of thanksgiving, the Magnificat, rings out as it did for the first time at Ain-Karim: All generations call you blessed (cf. Lk 1:48).

Gathered at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, which remind us that Jerusalem too was surrounded by hills (cf. Ps 124:2) and that Mary had gone up into those hills (cf. Lk 1:39), we are here to celebrate Mary's "going up" to the heavenly Jerusalem, to the threshold of the eternal temple of the Most Holy Trinity. Here in Denver, at the World Youth Day, the Catholic sons and daughters of America, together with others "from every tribe and tongue, people and nation" (Rv 5:9), join all the generations since who have cried out: God has done great things for you, Mary—and for all of us, members of his pilgrim people! (cf. Lk 1:49).

With my heart full of praise for the Queen of Heaven, the sign of hope and source of comfort on our pilgrimage of faith to "the heavenly Jerusalem" (Heb 12:22), I greet all of you who are present at this solemn Liturgy. It is a pleasure for me to see so many priests, religious and lay faithful from Denver, from the state of Colorado, from all parts of the United States, and from so many countries of the world, who have joined the young people of the World Youth Day to honour the definitive victory of grace in Mary, the Mother of the Redeemer.

So much depends on world's young people

2. The Eighth World Youth Day is a celebration of Life. This gathering has been the occasion of a serious reflection on the words of Jesus Christ: "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (Jn 10:10). Young people from every corner of the world, in ardent prayer you have opened your hearts to the truth of Christ's promise of new Life. Through the sacraments, especially Penance and the Eucharist, and by means of the unity and friendship created among so many, you have had a real and transforming experience of the new Life which only Christ can give. You, young pilgrims, have also shown that you understand that Christ's gift of Life is not for you alone. You have become more conscious of your vocation and mission in the Church and in the world. For me, our meeting has been a deep and moving experience of your faith in Christ, and I make my own the words of Saint Paul: "I have great confidence in you, I have great pride in you; I am filled with encouragement, I am overflowing with joy" (2 Cor 7:4).

These are not words of empty praise. I am confident that you have grasped the scale of the challenge that lies before you, and that you will have the wisdom and courage to meet that challenge. So much depends on you.

3. This marvellous world—so loved by the Father that he sent his only Son for its salvation (cf. Jn 3:17)—is the theatre of a never-ending battle being waged for our dignity and identity as free, spiritual beings. This struggle parallels the apocalyptic combat described in the first reading of this Mass. Death battles against Life: a "culture of death" seeks to impose itself on our desire to live, and live to the full. There are those who reject the light of life, preferring "the fruitless works of darkness" (Eph 5:11). Their harvest is injustice, discrimination, exploitation, deceit, violence. In every age, a measure of their apparent success is the death of the Innocents. In our own century, as at no other time in history, the "culture of death" has assumed a social and institutional form of legality to justify the most horrible crimes against humanity:

genocide, "final solutions", "ethnic cleansings", and the massive "taking of lives of human beings even before they are born or before they reach the natural point of death" (cf. *Dominum et Vivificantem*, n. 57).

Today's reading from the Book of Revelation presents the Woman surrounded by hostile forces. The absolute nature of their attack is symbolized in the object of their evil intention: the Child, the symbol of new life. The "dragon" (Rv 12:3), the "ruler of this world" (Jn 12:31) and the "father of lies" (Jn 8:44), relentlessly tries to eradicate from human hearts the sense of gratitude and respect for the original, extraordinary and fundamental gift of God: human life itself. Today that struggle has become increasingly direct.

Without objective truth human rights are threatened

4. Dear friends, this gathering in Denver on the theme of life should lead us to a deeper awareness of the internal contradiction present in a part of the culture of the modern "metropolis".

When the Founding Fathers of this great nation enshrined certain inalienable rights in the Constitution—and something similar exists in many countries and in many international declarations—they did so because they recognized the existence of a "law"—a series of rights and duties—engraved by the Creator on each person's heart and conscience.

In much of contemporary thinking, any reference to a "law" guaranteed by the Creator is absent. There remains only each individual's choice of this or that objective as convenient or useful in a given set of circumstances. No longer is anything considered intrinsically "good" and "universally binding". Rights are affirmed but, because they are without any reference to an objective truth, they are deprived of any solid basis. Vast sectors of society are confused about what is right and what is wrong, and are at the mercy of those with the power to "create" opinion and impose it on others.

The family especially is under attack. And the sacred character of human life denied. Naturally, the weakest members of society are the most at risk: the unborn, children, the sick, the handicapped, the old, the poor and unemployed, the immigrant and refugee, the South of the world!

5. Young pilgrims, Christ needs you to enlighten the world and to show it the "path to life" (Ps 16:11). The challenge is to make the Church's "yes" to Life concrete and effective. The struggle will be long, and it needs each one of you. Place your intelligence, your talents, your enthusiasm, your compassion and your fortitude at the service of life!

Have no fear. The outcome of the battle for Life is already decided, even though the struggle goes on against great odds and with much suffering. This certainty is what the second reading declares: "Christ is now raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. ...so in Christ all will come to life again" (1 Cor 15:20-22). The paradox of the Christian message is this: Christ—the Head—has already conquered sin and death. Christ in his Body—the pilgrim People of God—continually suffers the onslaught of the Evil One and all the evil which sinful humanity is capable of.

6. At this stage of history, the liberating message of the Gospel of Life has been put into your hands. And the mission of proclaiming it to the ends of the earth is now passing to your generation. Like the great Apostle Paul, you too must feel the full urgency of the task: "Woe to me if I do not evangelize" (1 Cor 9:16). Woe to you if you do not succeed in defending life. The Church needs your energies, your enthusiasm, your youthful ideals, in order to make the Gospel of life penetrate the fabric of society, transforming people's hearts and the structures of society in order to create a civilization of true justice and love. Now more than ever, in a world that is often without light and without the courage of noble ideals, people need the fresh, vital spirituality of the Gospel.

Do not be afraid to go out on the streets and into public places, like the first Apostles who preached Christ and the Good News of salvation in the squares of cities, towns and villages. This is no time to be ashamed of the Gospel, (cf. Rom 1: 16). It is the time to preach it from the rooftops (cf. Mt 10:27). Do not be afraid to break out of comfortable and routine modes of living, in order to take up the challenge of making Christ known in the modern "metropolis". It is you who must "go out into the byroads" (Mt 22:9) and invite everyone you meet to the banquet which God has prepared for his people. The Gospel must not be kept

hidden because of fear or indifference. It was never meant to be hidden away in private. It has to be put on a stand so that people may see its fight and give praise to our heavenly Father (cf. Mt 5:15-16).

Share the freedom you have found in Christ

Jesus went in search of the men and women of his time. He engaged them in an open and truthful dialogue, whatever their condition. As the Good Samaritan of the human family, he came close to people to heal them of their sins and of the wounds which life inflicts, and to bring them back to the Father's house. Young people of World Youth Day, the Church asks you to go, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to those who are near and those who are far away. Share with them the freedom you have found in Christ. People thirst for genuine inner freedom. They yearn for the Life which Christ came to give in abundance. The world at the approach of a new millennium, for which the whole Church is preparing, is like a field ready for the harvest. Christ needs labourers ready to work in his vineyard. May you, the Catholic young people of the world, not fail him. In your hands, carry the cross of Christ. On your lips, the words of life. In your hearts, the saving grace of the Lord.

7. At her Assumption, Mary was "taken up to Life"—body and soul. She is already a part of "the first fruits" (I Cor 15:20) of our Saviour's redemptive death and resurrection. The Son took his human life from her; in return he gave her the fullness of communion in divine Life. She is the only other being in whom the mystery has already been completely accomplished. In Mary the final victory of Life over death is already a reality. And, as the Second Vatican Council teaches: "In the most holy Virgin the Church has already reached the perfection whereby she exists without spot or wrinkle" (Lumen gentium, n. 65). In and through the Church we too have hope of "an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for us" (cf. 1 Pt 1:4).

Mary helps us to increase in holiness

You are blessed, O Mary! Mother of the Eternal Son born of your virgin womb, you are full of grace (cf. Lk 1:28). You have received the abundance of Life (cf. Jn 10:10) as no one else among the descendants of Adam and Eve. As the most faithful "hearer of the Word" (cf. Lk 11:28), you not only treasured and pondered this mystery in your heart (cf. Lk 2:19, 51), but you observed it in your body and nourished it by the self-giving love with which you surrounded Jesus throughout his earthly life. As Mother of the Church, you guide us still from your place in heaven and intercede for us. You lead us to Christ, "the Way, and the Truth and the Life" (Jn 14:6), and help us to increase in holiness by conquering sin (cf. Lumen gentium, n. 65).

8. The Liturgy presents you, Mary, as the Woman clothed with the sun (cf. Rv 12: 1). But you are even more splendidly clothed with that divine Light which can become the Life of all those created in the image and likeness of God himself: "this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (Jn 1:4-5).

O woman clothed with the sun, the youth of the world greet you with so much love; they come to you with all the courage of their young hearts. Denver has helped them to become more conscious of the Life which your Divine Son has brought.

We are all witnesses of this.

These young people now know that Life is more powerful than the forces of death; they know that the Truth is more powerful than darkness; that Love is stronger than death (cf. Song 8:6).

Your spirit rejoices, O Mary, and our spirit rejoices with you because the Mighty One has done great things for you and for us—for all these young people gathered here in Denver—and holy is his name!

His mercy is from age to age.

We rejoice, Mary, we rejoice with you, Virgin assumed into heaven.

The Lord has done great things for you! The Lord has done great things for us! Alleluia. Amen.

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September 21, 1993

'Ad limina Apostolorum': Bishops of the United States - VII

Form young consciences in the light of objective moral norms

"In spite of negative signs, many hunger for an authentic and challenging spirituality...and young people especially are looking for a solid foundation upon which to build their lives". These remarks of the Holy Father were the theme of his first ad limina address to United States Bishops since returning from World Youth Day last month. Speaking to prelates from the six states of New England, who were joined by Archbishop Stafford of Denver, the Pope encouraged them to inspire young people with the undiluted Gospel. Here is his English-language address which was given on Tuesday, 21 September, at Castel Gandolfo.

Your Eminence,

Dear Brother Bishops,

1. "I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all, making my prayer with joy, thankful for your partnership in the Gospel" (Phil 1:3-5). With these sentiments of the Apostle Paul I cordially welcome you - the Bishops of New England. Paul's journeys to Jerusalem to meet Peter (cf. Gal 1:18; 2:1-2) provide the first example of those fraternal encounters which have become the Bishops' visits ad limina Apostolorum. We have conversed and prayed together as brothers in the Lord. Thus, these meetings foster the bonds of hierarchical and affective communion between us. Through them we are mutually strengthened - in the words of *Lumen gentium* - "by the common sharing of all things and by the common effort to attain to fullness in unity" (n.13).

Today I wish to thank the whole Church in the United States, particularly the Archdiocese of Denver, for hosting the Eighth World Youth Day. My visit in the Rocky Mountain state, where hundreds of thousands of young people gathered to profess their faith in Christ, experience communion with the Church and commit themselves to the pressing task of the new evangelization, was a time of great joy and renewed hope. I was moved many times by the young people's obvious and joyous love of God and of the Church. They told us their stories of suffering for the Gospel, of conquering seemingly overwhelming obstacles with divine help, and of their anguish before a world tormented by despair, cynicism and conflict. I came away from Denver praising God who reveals to the young the secrets of his kingdom (cf. Mt 11:25). All of us, Bishops of the Church, should reflect anew on our ministry to young people and on our responsibility to present to them the full truth of Christ and his Church.

Young people are looking for a solid foundation

The young people gathered at Denver certainly deserved to hear the words of Saint Paul which I used at the closing Mass: "I have great confidence in you, I have great pride in you: I am filled with encouragement, I am overflowing with joy" (2 Cor 7:4). From the very many letters I have received, I share with you what one young woman, who is about to begin her university studies, wrote to me. She says: "We were asleep in the arms of Christ: it was (the World Youth Day which) awakened us from our nightmares of self-indulgence and loneliness, to look up into the eyes of that God-Man who is our way, our truth and our life". In such words we Pastors must read a continuing challenge to accompany young people in their pilgrimage of faith, the journey they make in response to God's grace at work in their hearts, that journey which from time to time needs moments of special intensity, such as pilgrimages, prayer-meetings, retreats. It requires time and attention to listen to young people, to teach them, to encourage them. The apostolate to youth must be a priority of the Church at the approach of the third millennium.

2. We cannot ignore the deep desires that are stirring in people's hearts today. In spite of negative signs, many hunger for an authentic and challenging spirituality. There is "a fresh discovery of God in his transcendent reality as the infinite "Spirit" (*Dominum et Vivificantem*, n. 2), and young people especially are looking for a solid foundation upon which to build their lives. The youth of America look to you to lead them to Christ, who is the only "existentially adequate response to the desire in every human heart for goodness, truth and life" (*Centesimus annus*, n. 24). Allow me to repeat what I said to the Bishops last month in Denver: "Are we always ready to help the young people discover the transcendent elements of the

Christian life? From our words and actions do they conclude that the Church is indeed a mystery of communion with the Blessed Trinity, and not just a human institution with temporal aims?" (Homily, n. 2).

3. Among the concrete lessons of the World Youth Day we should not overlook young people's capacity and desire for prayer, which leads to sharing in the Son's own filial dialogue with the Father in accordance with Saint Paul's marvelous expression in the Letter to the Galatian: "because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'" (Gal 4:6). Prayer is not one occupation among many, but is at the center of our life in Christ. It turns our attention away from ourselves and directs it to the Lord. Prayer fills the mind with truth and gives hope to the heart. Without a deep experience of prayer, growth in the moral life will be shallow. The authentic renewal of your Dioceses calls for the apostolate of prayer rooted in faith, strengthened by the sacramental and liturgical life, and active in charity (cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, n. 2558).

Young people need the fullness of Catholic doctrine

4. Hand in hand with nurturing the spiritual vitality of young men and women goes the challenge of presenting them with "the fullness of the truth which God has enabled us to know about himself" (Redemptoris missio, n. 5). It is clear that the controversies and dissent of past decades are of little interest to them. They are not inspired by a Gospel which is diluted, disguised or made to seem effortless. Every effort should be made to guarantee that catechetical and religious education programs, Catholic schools and institutions of higher learning and, in particular, the preaching ministry of the Church, present serenely and convincingly - but without embarrassment or compromise - the whole treasury of Church teaching.

Only by forming young people in genuine Catholic spirituality and in the fullness of Catholic doctrine can you help them to assume fully their role and responsibilities in the Church, something of which they themselves are very conscious. With their enthusiasm and boundless energy, they should be encouraged to be "leading characters in evangelization and participants in the renewal of society" (Christifideles laici, n. 46). Not just evangelized, they are themselves evangelizers who bring the Gospel to their peers, including those alienated from the Church and those who have not yet heard the Good News. Likewise, many young people have an enormous potential for generosity, dedication and commitment and are attracted to forms of volunteer work, especially in serving the needy. With them, the leaders of the Church in the United States should continue to explore ways in which their talents and desire to participate in the Church's mission can be more fully realized. The ordinary means of "youth ministry", which focus on the parish, should continue so that the young are not isolated from the broader community. But, as your own experience tells you, it is often helpful to supplement this through associations, movements, special centers and groups that meet their particular needs (cf. Redemptoris missio, n. 37).

5. As the increase in interest in ethical questions and the growing debate about "values" in American life demonstrate, the need for moral formation through the work of families, schools and other institutions is being felt more and more. Given this situation, Pastors have many opportunities to provide leadership in the area of moral development, bearing as they do the truth of Christ, the wisdom of God (cf. 1 Cor 1:24) who sets us free (cf. Jn 8:32). Yet direction and vision will only be effective when there is a consensus about how to live. The Church has that vision of life's meaning and purpose in the "one faith" of the Gospel. Is it not true that the question asked by the young man in the Gospel, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" (Mk 10:17), is being asked of us today with an urgency that demands our close attention?

The needed renewal of social and political life can only take place if the intrinsic connection between faith and morality is clear. Young Catholics are sensitive to the need for consistency between faith professed and faith lived. They demand a clear sense of what it means in practice to be Catholic. Pastors ought to preach with a new confidence and zeal the "answer" about morality that the Lord has entrusted to his Church. Among the themes of this Good News is the essential bond between human freedom and truth, in the sense that a freedom which refuses to be bound to truth loses its foundation (cf. Centesimus annus, n. 41). Young people sense - perhaps sometimes without knowing why - that religious, moral and cultural relativism does not lead to happiness and that freedom without truth is illusory.

Clear teaching on morality is liberating



One of the key pastoral problems facing us is the widespread misunderstanding of the role of conscience, whereby individual conscience and experience are exalted above or against Church teaching. The young women and men of America, and indeed of the whole Western world, who are often victims of educational theories which propose that they "create" their own values and that "feeling good about themselves" is a primary guiding moral principle, are asking to be led out of this moral confusion. All those who teach in the name of the Church should fearlessly honor the dignity of the moral conscience as the sanctuary in which the voice of God is heard (cf. *Gaudium et spes*, n. 16); but with equal care they should proclaim, in opposition to all subjectivism, that conscience is not a tribunal which creates the good, but must be formed in the light of universal and objective norms of morality. Clear teaching on these matters is also an essential part of the necessary return to the practice of the sacrament of Penance. The thousands of confessions heard by the priests present in Denver show that the young people know the value of this sacrament, in spite of the widespread crisis affecting it (cf. *Reconciliatio et paenitentia*, n. 28).

6. Clear teaching on all such matters is liberating because it presents the true meaning of discipleship: Christ calls his followers to friendship with him (cf. *Jn 15:15*). In fact, the personal following of Christ is the essential foundation of Christian morality. The "obedience of faith" (*Rom 16:26*) is both an intellectual assent to doctrine as well as a life commitment which draws us into ever more perfect union with Christ himself. The Church must always be careful not to reduce "the word of truth" (*Col 1:5*) to an abstract code of ethics and morality, so closely linked to the new evangelization, must not empty the cross of Christ of its power (cf. *1 Cor 1:17*).

I am confident that the Bishops of the United States will continue to give special pastoral attention to young people, in whom the Church recognizes her own divinely given youthfulness as the Bride of Christ (cf. *Eph 5:22-33*). I entrust all the priests, religious and faithful of your Dioceses to Mary, Mother of the Redeemer, that she may remain with you in prayer (cf. *Acts 1:14*) and make you messengers of hope and bearers of life to the world. With affection in the Lord I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing to you and all the faithful of New England.

**November 21, 1993**

MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER  
POPE JOHN PAUL II  
FOR THE IX AND X WORLD YOUTH DAY

"As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (*Jn 20:21*).

Dear Young People,

1. "Peace be with you!" (*Jn 20:19*). This is the greeting, rich in meaning, which the risen Lord extended to the disciples, so fearful and dismayed after his passion.

With the same intense and deep feeling I now address you, as we prepare to celebrate the Ninth and Tenth World Youth Days. They will take place, as is now the pleasant custom, on Palm Sunday of 1994 and 1995, while the great international meeting, which gathers young people from all over the world around the Pope, is set for January 1995 in Manila, capital of the Philippines.

In the previous meetings that have marked our journey of reflection and prayer, like the disciples, we have had the opportunity of "seeing" — which also means believing and knowing, almost "touching" (cf. *1 Jn 1:1*) — the risen Lord.

We "saw" him and welcomed him as teacher and friend in Rome in 1984 and 1985, when we began our pilgrimage from the centre and heart of Catholicism in order to give a reason for the hope that is in us (cf. *1 Pt 3:15*), carrying his cross along the highways of the world. We asked him — insistently — to be with us in our daily journey.

We "saw" him in Buenos Aires in 1987 when, together with the young people of every continent, especially from Latin America, "we came to know and believe in the love God has for us" (*1 Jn 4:16*) and we proclaimed that his revelation, like the sun that sheds light and warmth, nourishes the hope and renews the joy of the missionary commitment to build the civilization of love.

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We "saw" him in Santiago de Compostela in 1988, where we discovered his face and recognized him as the way and the truth and the life (Jn 14:6), while together with the Apostle James we meditated on the ancient Christian roots of Europe.

We "saw" him in 1991 in Czestochowa, when — with barriers fallen — all together, young people from East and West, under the kindly gaze of our heavenly Mother, we proclaimed the fatherhood of God through the Spirit and we acknowledged that we are - in him - brothers and sisters: "You received a spirit of adoption" (Rom 8:15).

Man is driven to seek the face of God

Recently we "saw" him again in Denver, in the heart of the United States of America, where we sought him in the face of contemporary man in a substantially different context from the previous pauses, but no less exalting for the depth of its significance, experiencing and tasting the gift of life in abundance: "I came that they might have life and have it more abundantly" (Jn 10:10).

As we keep before our eyes and in our hearts the wonderful and unforgettable spectacle of that great meeting in the Rocky Mountains, our pilgrimage continues and this time pauses in Manila, in the vast continent of Asia, the crossroads of the Tenth World Youth Day.

The desire to "see the Lord" has always occupied the heart of man (cf. Jn 12:21) and it drives him unceasingly to seek his face. We too, as we start out, express this longing and, with the pilgrim of Zion, we repeat: "Your presence, O Lord, I seek" (Ps 27:8).

The Son of God comes to meet us, he welcomes us and shows himself to us, he repeats to us what he said to the disciples on the evening of Easter: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (Jn 20:21).

Once again, young people from all over the world are summoned by Jesus Christ, the centre of our lives, the basis of our faith, the reason for our hope and the source of our charity.

Called by him, young people from every corner of the globe ask themselves about their commitment to the "new evangelization", continuing the mission entrusted to the Apostles and in which every Christian, through his Baptism and membership in the community of the Church, is called to participate.

2. The vocation and missionary commitment of the Church spring from the central mystery of our faith: Easter. It is in fact "on the evening of that first day" that Jesus appeared to the disciples, barricaded behind locked doors "for fear of the Jews" (Jn 20:19).

We hope to triumph in the fullness of time

Having given proof of his boundless love by embracing the cross and offering himself in sacrifice for the redemption of all people — he had in fact said: "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends" (Jn 15:13) — the divine Master returns among his own, among those whom he had loved most intensely and with whom he had spent his earthly life.

It is an extraordinary encounter, during which their hearts are filled with happiness for the refound presence of Christ, after the events of his tragic passion and his glorious resurrection. The disciples "rejoiced when they saw the Lord" (Jn 20:20).

Meeting him on the day after his resurrection meant for the Apostles that they could see with their own eyes that his message was not false, that his promises were not written in the sand. He, alive and blazing with glory, is the proof of the almighty love of God, which radically changes the course of history and of our individual lives.

The meeting with Jesus is therefore the event which gives meaning to human life and profoundly alters it, by opening the spirit to horizons of authentic freedom.

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Our time too occurs "on the day after the resurrection". It is "the acceptable time", "the day of salvation" (2 Cor 6:2).

The risen Christ returns among us with the fullness of joy and with overflowing richness of life. Hope becomes certainty, because if he has conquered death, we too can hope to triumph one day in the fullness of time, in the period of the final contemplation of God.

3. However the meeting with the risen Lord does not reflect only a moment of personal joy. It is rather the occasion when the call that awaits every human being is shown in all its breadth. Strong in our faith in the risen Christ, we are all invited to open the doors of life, without fear or doubt, to welcome the Word which is the Way, the Truth and the Life (cf. Jn 14:6), and to shout it courageously to the whole world.

The salvation offered to us is a gift that should not be jealously hidden. It is like the light of the sun, which by its nature breaks through the darkness; it is like the water of a clear spring, which gushes from the heart of the rock.

"God so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (Jn 3:16). Jesus, sent by the Father to mankind, communicates the abundance of life to every believer (cf. Jn 10:10), as we reflected and proclaimed on the occasion of the recent Day in Denver.

His Gospel must become "communication" and mission. The missionary vocation summons every Christian; it becomes the very essence of every testimony of concrete and living faith. It is a mission which traces its origins from the Father's plan, the plan of love and salvation which is carried out through the power of the Spirit, without which every apostolic initiative is destined to failure. It is to enable his disciples to carry out this mission that Jesus says to them: "Receive the Holy Spirit" (Jn 20:22). He thus transmits to the Church his own saving mission, so that the Easter mystery may continue to be communicated to every person, in every age, in every corner of the globe.

You, young people, are especially called to become missionaries of this New Evangelization, by daily witnessing to the Word that saves.

4. You personally experience the anxieties of the present historical period, fraught with hope and doubt, in which it can at times be easy to lose the way that leads to the encounter with Christ.

In fact, numerous are the temptations of our time, the seductions that seek to muffle the divine voice resounding within the heart of each individual.

We are sent to proclaim hope and reconciliation

To the people of our century, to all of you, dear young people, who hunger and thirst for truth, the Church offers herself as a travelling companion. She offers the eternal Gospel message and entrusts you with an exalting apostolic task: to be the protagonists of the New Evangelization.

As the faithful guardian and representative of the wealth of faith transmitted to her by Christ, she is ready to enter into dialogue with the new generations; in order to answer their needs and expectations and to find in frank and open dialogue the most appropriate way to reach the source of divine salvation.

The Church entrusts to young people the task of proclaiming to the world the joy which springs from having met Christ. Dear friends, allow yourselves to be drawn to Christ; accept his invitation and follow him. Go and preach the Good News that redeems (cf. Mt 28:19); do it with happiness in your hearts and become communicators of hope in a world which is often tempted to despair, communicators of faith in a society which at times seems resigned to disbelief, communicators of love in daily events that are often marked by a mentality of the most unbridled selfishness.

5. To be able to imitate the disciples, who, overwhelmed by the breath of the Spirit, confidently preached their own faith in the Redeemer who loves everyone and who wants to save everyone (cf. Acts 2:22-24; 32-36), it is necessary to become new people, eradicating the old man within us and allowing ourselves to be totally renewed by the strength of the Lord's Spirit.

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Each one of you is sent into the world, especially among your contemporaries, to communicate through the example of your life and work the Gospel message of reconciliation and peace: "We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God" (2 Cor 5:20).

This reconciliation is in the first place the individual destiny of every Christian who receives and continuously renews his personal identity as a disciple of the Son of God in prayer and through receiving the sacraments, especially Penance and the Eucharist.

But it is also the destiny of the whole human family. To be a missionary today in the heart of our society also means making the best use of the media for that religious and pastoral task.

Having become enthusiastic communicators of the saving Word and witnesses to the joy of Easter, you will be builders of peace in a world that searches for this peace as if for a utopia, often forgetting its origin. Peace — as you well know — resides in the heart of every man, if only he knows how to open himself to the greeting of the risen Redeemer: "Peace be with you" (Jn 20:19).

In view of the imminent arrival of the third Christian millennium, to you young people the task of becoming communicators of hope and peacemakers is entrusted in a special way (cf. Mt 5:9) in a world that is ever more in need of credible witnesses and consistent messengers. Know how to speak to the hearts of your contemporaries, who thirst for truth and happiness, in a constant, even if often unconscious, search for God.

6. Dear young people of the whole world!

As the journey towards the Ninth and Tenth World Youth Days officially begins with this Message, I wish again to express my affectionate greeting to each one of you, especially to all who live in the Philippines: in 1995 the world meeting of young people with the Pope will be celebrated for the first time on the Asian continent, so rich in tradition and culture. Young people of the Philippines, it is your turn to prepare a welcome for your many friends from all over the world. So, the young Church of Asia is called in a special way to give a lively and vibrant testimony of faith at the appointment in Manila. My wish is that she will know how to receive this gift that Christ himself is about to offer her.

To you all, young people from every part of the world, I extend my invitation to journey in spirit towards the next Youth Days. Accompanied and guided by your Pastors, in your parishes and Dioceses, in the ecclesial associations, movements and groups, be ready to receive the seeds of holiness and grace which the Lord will surely bestow with generous abundance.

I hope that the celebration of these days may be for you all a privileged occasion of formation and growth in the personal and community knowledge of Christ; may it be an interior stimulus to consecrate yourselves to the Church in the service of your brothers and sisters to build the civilization of love.

To Mary, the Virgin present in the Upper Room, the Mother of the Church (cf. Acts 1:14), I entrust the preparation and success of the next World Youth Days: may she share with us the secret of how to receive her Son into our lives so we may fulfil his will (cf. Jn 2:5).

May my heartfelt and paternal Blessing accompany you.

From the Vatican, 21 November 1993, Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Universal King.

# 1994

March 27, 1994

9TH WORLD YOUTH DAY – ROME

Pope John Paul II: Come with me to save the world

Homily of the Palm Sunday Liturgy, 27 March 1994

1. "The stones will cry out..." (Lk 19:40).

You young people know that stones cry out. They are mute yet they have their own particular eloquence, their own cry. Anyone who stands face to face with mountain peaks, in the Alps or in the Himalayas, for example, realizes this. The eloquence, the cry, of these imposing masses of rock is breathtaking and throws man to his knees; it forces him to withdraw into himself and turn to his invisible Creator. These mute stones speak. You young people know this better than others because you explore their mysterious eloquence, going on excursions in the high mountains, forcing yourselves to make the effort and by so doing to test your youthful energy.

You know it, and this is why Christ says of you: "If they keep silent, the stones will cry out! ..." (Lk 19:40). He said this at the moment of his messianic entrance into Jerusalem, while some Pharisees tried to induce him to silence the young people who were shouting: "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Mk 11:9). Christ replied: "If they keep silent, the stones will cry out ...". Jesus is challenging you with these words, dearly beloved, and you have accepted the challenge, a challenge that has been renewed for 10 years now, every Palm Sunday, when you young people gather in St Peter's Square to repeat: "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!".

Our 1984 meeting in this square led to the idea of World Youth Day. Today this idea has been realized for the tenth time. This year you, American friends, have also come here from Denver, bringing the pilgrim cross to hand it over to your peers from the Philippines where, God willing, the world youth meeting is to take place next January: Manila 1995.

Young people raise their voice in witness to Christ

2. "The stones will cry out...".

Stone contains great energy. The forces of nature that burst through the earth's crust forming chains of lofty mountains are expressed in it. Stone can be a threatening force. However, as well as the mountainous rocks in which the mystery of creation is expressed, there are also stones that serve man for his works of genius. It is enough to think of all the temples in the world, of the Gothic cathedrals, the works of the Renaissance, like this Basilica of St Peter's, or of certain holy buildings in the Far East.

Today however, I ask you to pause spiritually close to a specific temple: the temple of the God of the Covenant in Jerusalem. Only a humble fragment of it remains, known as the "Wailing Wall", because near its stones the children of Israel meet, recalling the grandeur of the former sanctuary where God made his dwelling and which was the object of all Israel's pride. It was razed to the ground in A.D. 70. This is why today the Wailing Wall is so eloquent. Eloquent for the children of Israel; eloquent for us too, because we know that God really made his dwelling in this temple, and the empty space of the Holy of Holies preserved within it the tablets of the Ten Commandments entrusted to Moses by the Lord on Mount Sinai. This most holy place was separated from the rest of the temple by a veil, torn down the middle at the moment when Christ died: a disturbing sign that the God of the Covenant was present among his people.

Thus we go up to Jerusalem where the Son of Man will be given up to death and crucified, so as to rise on the third day. Today's feast, Palm Sunday, reminds us vividly of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem when the sons and daughters of Israel proclaimed God's glory, greeting the One " who comes in the name of the Lord": "Hosanna to the Son of David!".

3. "If they keep silent, the stones will cry out ...".

In fact they are not silent! We are amazed at how young people raise their voices. They do not let the mere stones speak; they do not allow the temples of the living God to become cold museum pieces. They speak with loud voices. They speak in different places on the earth, and their voices must be heard. In this way it happens that because of their witness, the young disciples of Jesus are a surprise to many.

Christ wants to involve you in his mission

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This happened precisely last year in Denver, Colorado, where on the occasion of such a large gathering of youth from all over the world, youthful excesses were predicted and even cases of violence and abuse, all of which would have been a counter-witness. It was expected that this would happen and adequate precautions were taken. For you, dear friends, it was a challenge. And you accepted it and responded by your witness. A living witness in which you broke down the stereotypes according to which people expected to see and judge you. You showed who you truly are and what you desire. And your voices echoed in that American metropolis at the foot of the Rocky Mountains in such a way that you forced both the mountain peaks and the gigantic modern buildings to be amazed at hearing and seeing you as you really are.

4. For this reason, dearly beloved, do not be surprised, if after the experiences of Buenos Aires, Santiago de Compostela, Jasna Góra and Denver, I wish to speak to you with the message Christ left the Apostles in his paschal mystery. Here we are entering Holy Week. We will go to Jerusalem, to the Upper Room of Holy Thursday; we will climb to Golgotha; we will pause at the sepulchre in the silence of the Easter Vigil; then we will return to the Upper Room to meet the risen Christ, who will repeat to us what he told the Apostles who rejoiced at his presence: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (Jn 20:21).

"And the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord" (Jn 20:20), wrote John the Evangelist. You too will rejoice to see him among you alive and triumphant over death, which could not triumph over him. You too will rejoice to hear the words he addresses to you. You will rejoice because he trusts you, he has such trust in you that he tells you through your Pastors: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you". You are waiting to be sent, to be entrusted with his Gospel, to be entrusted with the world's salvation. Your young hearts are waiting precisely for these words of the Redeemer.

Man must be aware of being sent. This is what I told Rome's young people last Thursday. Without this awareness human life becomes dreary and gathers dust. Being sent means having a task to fulfil, a demanding commitment. Being sent means opening the way to a great good, awaited by all. Being sent means serving a supreme cause.

You young people are waiting precisely for this! Christ wishes to meet you and involve you in the great mission entrusted to him by the Father. It is a mission that endures in the world, always alive and contemporary, still unfulfilled, always to be fulfilled until the very last day.

"Come with me to save the world—it is already the 20th century", sang the young people in Poland, in the very difficult times of the struggle for the Truth and the Life that is Christ and for the Way he has indicated (cf. Jn 14:6). Today, as this 20th century is drawing to a close, we must think of the future, of the 21st century, the third millennium. This future belongs to you. Tomorrow belongs to you. You are the men and women of tomorrow. And Christ is "the same yesterday, today and forever" (Heb 13:8). Tell all your peers that he is waiting for them and that only he has the words of eternal life (cf. Jn 6:68). Tell all your peers. Amen.

#### **September 11, 1994**

THE HOLY FATHER'S ADDRESS TO THE YOUTH DELIVERED DURING THE EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATION ON THE HIPPODROME IN ZAGREB

11 SEPTEMBER 1994

Dear young people, I am very glad to see how many of you have come to show your love for the Pope and the Church. I greet you with great joy. Thank you for the most cordial welcome and for your youthful enthusiasm! As I look at so many young faces, I recall a magnificent gathering in Denver

Last year, when I had the opportunity to meet so many of your peers from all over the world. It was a wonderful experience and I shall never forget it. With so many young people coming to one place, naturally there were concerns regarding peace and order. Thank God, everything went well, and the gathering was a respectful and festive celebration. The young people in Denver gave a clear signal to the world. They proved that it was possible to belong to different nations and cultures and yet to understand each other, love each other, to overcome all difficulties. This experience could be a starting point to see what you need to do. Here and throughout the Balkans it is for you, the young, to take the initiative in the creation of peace. There is one way to peace, and only one: listen to Jesus Christ, and receive his mercy. In a similar vein, next

year we shall go to Manila, to hear the word of the risen Lord: "As the Father sent me, so I send you." (John 20:21)

My beloved, Jesus Christ is the truth which can give purpose to your life and hope for your future. He speaks to you, your families and your people when he repeats his ascension message: "Peace be with you." (John 20:19) Peace is the great gift from God. To receive this gift, we must change our hearts, we must let Him come first in our lives. A man rejecting or neglecting God almost inevitably turns to false idols. The idolatry of a nation, a race, a party finds words to justify hatred, discrimination and violence. God is the only solid foundation for life and for the inviolable dignity of every man. My beloved, Christ wants you to dismiss all such temptations. He calls upon you to become the witnesses and builders of peace. Accept this demanding but exalted mission.

He invites you to meet him and know him so that, once you become close friends, you may announce to other people the miracle of his great love.

Holy Mary, the Mother of God of the Stone Gates, "Decus singulare Croatiae", stay by your sons who trust in you. You, "the Beginning of the better world", look upon them with merciful eye. May they respond to the Redeemer's call with your help.

May they always be, with your help, the trustworthy emissaries of your Son, the Prince of Peace. Renew their hearts and lives, make them stronger in the faith of the Apostles, so that they may bear witness to the coming of a new era and make peace. Save them from danger and deliver them from all evils, o blessed and glorious Virgin. Amen!

**October 5, 1994**

### **Crossing the Threshold of Hope**

IS THERE REALLY HOPE IN THE YOUNG?

Young people have a special place in the heart of the Holy Father, who often repeats that the whole Church looks to them with particular hope for a new beginning of evangelization.

Your Holiness, is this a realistic hope? Or are we adults only indulging in the illusion that each new generation will be better than ours and all those that came before?

Here you open an enormous field for discussion and reflection.

What are young people of today like, what are they looking for? It could be said that they are the same as ever. There is something in man which never changes, as the Council recalled in *Gaudium et Spes* (10). This is true especially in the young. But today's youth are also different from those who came before. In the past, the younger generations were shaped by the painful experience of war, of concentration camps, of constant danger. This experience allowed young people-I imagine all over the world, although I have Polish youth in mind-to develop traits of great heroism.

I think of the Warsaw uprising in 1944-the desperate revolt of my contemporaries, who sacrificed everything. They laid down their young lives. They wanted to demonstrate that they could live up to their great and demanding heritage. I was a part of that generation and I must say that the heroism of my contemporaries helped me to define my personal vocation. Father Konstanty Michalski, one of the great professors at the Jagellonian University in Kraków, wrote the book *Between Heroism and Brutality* after returning from the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. The title of this book captures the climate of the times. Referring to Friar Albert Chmielowski, Michalski recalled the words of the Gospel about the need "to give up one's life" (cf. Jn 15:13). Precisely in that period of absolute contempt for man, when the price of human life had perhaps never been considered so cheap, precisely then each life became precious, acquiring the value of a free gift.

In this regard, today's young people certainly grow up in a different context. They do not carry within them the experiences of the Second World War. Furthermore, many of them have not known-or do not remember-the struggle against Communism, against the totalitarian state. They live in freedom, which others have won for them, and have yielded in large part to the consumer culture. This is, in broad terms, the status of the present situation.

All the same, it is difficult to say that the young have rejected traditional values, that they have left the Church. The experiences of teachers and pastors confirm, today no less than yesterday, the idealism present in young people, even if nowadays it perhaps tends to be expressed mostly in the form of criticism, whereas before it would have translated more simply into duty. In general, the younger generations grow up in an atmosphere marked by a new positivism, whereas in Poland, when I was a boy, romantic traditions prevailed. The young people with whom I came into contact after I was ordained as a priest believed in these traditions. In the Church and in the Gospel they saw a point of reference which helped them to focus their inner strength, to lead their lives in a way that made sense. I still remember my conversations with those young people who spoke of their relationship with the faith in precisely these terms.

My most memorable experience of that period, when my pastoral activities concentrated above all on the young, was the discovery of the fundamental importance of youth. What is youth? It is not only a period of life that corresponds to a certain number of years, it is also a time given by Providence to every person and given to him as a responsibility. During that time he searches, like the young man in the Gospel, for answers to basic questions; he searches not only for the meaning of life but also for a concrete way to go about living his life. This is the most fundamental characteristic of youth. Every mentor, beginning with parents, let alone every pastor, must be aware of this characteristic and must know how to identify it in every boy and girl. I will say more: He must love this fundamental aspect of youth.

If at every stage of his life man desires to be his own person, to find love, during his youth he desires it even more strongly. The desire to be one's own person, however, must not be understood as a license to do anything, without exception. The young do not want that at all—they are willing to be corrected, they want to be told yes or no. They need guides, and they want them close at hand. If they turn to authority figures, they do so because they see in them a wealth of human warmth and a willingness to walk with them along the paths they are following.

Clearly, then, the fundamental problem of youth is profoundly personal. In life, youth is when we come to know ourselves. It is also a time of communion. Young people, whether boys or girls, know they must live for and with others, they know that their life has meaning to the extent that it becomes a free gift for others. Here is the origin of all vocations—whether to priesthood or religious life, or to marriage and family. The call to marriage is also a vocation, a gift from God. I will never forget a young man, an engineering student in Kraków, who everyone knew aspired with determination to holiness. This was his life plan. He knew he had been "created for greater things," as Saint Stanislaus Kostka once expressed it. And at the same time, he had no doubt that his vocation was neither to priesthood nor to religious life. He knew he was called to remain in the secular world. Technical work, the study of engineering, was his passion. He sought a companion for his life and sought her on his knees, in prayer. I will never forget the conversation in which, after a special day of retreat, he said to me: "I think that this is the woman who should be my wife, that it is God who has given her to me." It was almost as if he were following not only the voice of his own wishes but above all the voice of God Himself. He knew that all good things come from Him, and he made a good choice. I am speaking of Jerzy Ciesielski, who died in a tragic accident in the Sudan, where he had been invited to teach at the University. The cause for his beatification is already under way.

It is this vocation to love that naturally allows us to draw close to the young. As a priest I realized this very early. I felt almost an inner call in this direction. It is necessary to prepare young people for marriage, it is necessary to teach them love. Love is not something that is learned, and yet there is nothing else as important to learn! As a young priest I learned to love human love. This has been one of the fundamental themes of my priesthood—my ministry in the pulpit, in the confessional, and also in my writing. If one loves human love, there naturally arises the need to commit oneself completely to the service of "fair love," because love is fair, it is beautiful.

After all, young people are always searching for the beauty in love. They want their love to be beautiful. If they give in to weakness, following models of behavior that can rightly be considered a "scandal in the contemporary world" (and these are, unfortunately, widely diffused models), in the depths of their hearts they still desire a beautiful and pure love. This is as true of boys as it is of girls. Ultimately, they know that only God can give them this love. As a result, they are willing to follow Christ, without caring about the sacrifices this may entail.



As a young priest and pastor I came to this way of looking at young people and at youth, and it has remained constant all these years. It is an outlook which also allows me to meet young people wherever I go. Every parish priest in Rome knows that my visits to the parish must conclude with a meeting between the Bishop of Rome and the young people of the parish. And not only in Rome, but anywhere the Pope goes, he seeks out the young and the young seek him out. Actually, in truth, it is not the Pope who is being sought out at all. The one being sought out is Christ, who knows "that which is in every man" (cf. Jn 2:25), especially in a young person, and who can give true answers to his questions! And even if they are demanding answers, the young are not afraid of them; more to the point, they even await them.

This also explains the idea of holding World Youth Days. At the very beginning, during the Jubilee Year of the Redemption, and then again for the International Year of Youth, sponsored by the United Nations (1985), young people were invited to Rome. This was the beginning. No one invented the World Youth Days. It was the young people themselves who created them. Those Days, those encounters, then became something desired by young people throughout the world. Most of the time these Days were something of a surprise for priests, and even bishops, in that they surpassed all their expectations.

The World Youth Days have become a great and fascinating witness that young people give of themselves. They have become a powerful means of evangelization. In the young there is, in fact, an immense potential for good and for creative possibility. Whenever I meet them in my travels throughout the world, I wait first of all to hear what they want to tell me about themselves, about their society, about their Church. And I always point out: "What I am going to say to you is not as important as what you are going to say to me. You will not necessarily say it to me in words; you will say it to me by your presence, by your song, perhaps by your dancing, by your skits, and finally by your enthusiasm."

We need the enthusiasm of the young. We need their *joie de vivre*. In it is reflected something of the original joy God had in creating man. The young experience this same joy within themselves. This joy is the same everywhere, but it is also ever new and original. The young know how to express this joy in their own special way.

It is not true that the Pope brings the young from one end of the world to the other. It is they who bring him. Even though he is getting older, they urge him to be young, they do not permit him to forget his experience, his discovery of youth and its great importance for the life of every man. I believe this explains a great deal.

The very day of the inauguration of my papal ministry, on October 22, 1978, at the conclusion of the liturgy, I said to the young people gathered in St. Peter's Square: "You are the hope of the Church and of the world. You are my hope." I have often repeated these words.

I would like to sum up by stressing that the young are searching for God, they are searching for the meaning of life, they are searching for definitive answers: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" (Lk 10:25). In this search, they cannot help but encounter the Church. And the Church also cannot help but encounter the young. The only necessity is that the Church have a profound understanding of what it means to be young, of the importance that youth has for every person. It is also necessary that the young know the Church, that they perceive Christ in the Church, Christ who walks through the centuries alongside each generation, alongside every person. He walks alongside each person as a friend. An important day in a young person's life is the day on which he becomes convinced that this is the only Friend who will not disappoint him, on whom he can always count.

**November 10, 1994**  
**Tertio Millenio Adveniente**

58. The future of the world and the Church belongs to the younger generation, to those who, born in this century, will reach maturity in the next, the first century of the new millennium. Christ expects great things from young people, as he did from the young man who asked him: "What good deed must I do, to have eternal life?" (Mt 19:16). I have referred to the remarkable answer which Jesus gave to him, in the recent Encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*, as I did earlier, in 1985, in my Apostolic Letter to the Youth of the World. Young people, in every situation, in every region of the world, do not cease to put questions to Christ: they meet him and they keep searching for him in order to question him further. If they succeed in

following the road which he points out to them, they will have the joy of making their own contribution to his presence in the next century and in the centuries to come, until the end of time: "Jesus is the same yesterday, today and for ever".

# 1995

January 14, 1995

HOMILY FOR WORLD YOUTH DAY'S PRAYER VIGIL

Pope John Paul II

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Homily delivered on January 14, 1995, at Luneta Park in Manila, the Philippines.

## Part I

1. In your questions I see repeated once more the scene from the Gospel where a young man asks Jesus, "Good teacher, what must I do?" (cf. Mk. 10:17). The first thing that Jesus looked for was the attitude behind the question, the sincerity of the search. Jesus understood that the young man was sincerely looking for the truth about life and about his own personal path in life.

This is important. Life is a gift of a certain period of time in which each of us faces a challenge which life itself brings: the challenge of having a purpose, a destiny and of striving for it. The opposite is to spend our lives on the surface of things, to "lose" our lives in futility; never to discover in ourselves the capacity for good and for real solidarity, and therefore never to discover the path to true happiness. Too many young people do not realize that they themselves are the ones who are mainly responsible for giving a worthwhile meaning to their lives. The mystery of human freedom is at the heart of the great adventure of living life well.

2. It is true that young people today experience difficulties that previous generations experienced only partially and in a limited way. The weakness of much of family life, the lack of communication between parents and children, the isolating and alienating influence of a large part of the media, all these things can produce confusion in young people about the truths and values which give a genuine meaning to life.

False teachers, many belonging to an intellectual elite in the worlds of science, culture and the media, present an anti-Gospel. They declare that every ideal is dead, contributing in this way to the profound moral crisis affecting society, a crisis which has opened the way for the toleration and even exaltation of forms of behavior which the moral conscience and common sense formerly held in abhorrence. When you ask them, "What must I do?" their only certainty is that there is no definite truth, no sure path. They want you to be like them: doubtful and cynical. Consciously or not, they advocate an approach to life that has led millions of young people into a sad loneliness in which they are deprived of reasons for hope and are incapable of real love.

3. You ask, "What are my expectations of young people?" In <Crossing the Threshold of Hope> I have written that "the fundamental problem of youth is profoundly personal.

Young people ... know that their life has meaning to the extent that it becomes a free gift for others" (p. 121). A question therefore is directed to each one of you personally: Are you capable of giving of yourself, your time, your energies, your talents, for the good of others? Are you capable of love? If you are, the church and society can expect great things from each one of you.

The vocation to love, understood as true openness to our fellow human beings and solidarity with them, is the most basic of all vocations. It is the origin of all vocations in life. That is what Jesus was looking for in the young man when he said, "Keep the commandments" (cf. Mk. 10:19). In other words, "Serve God and your neighbor according to all the demands of a true and upright heart." And when the young man indicated that he was already following that path, Jesus invited him to an even greater love: "Leave all and come, follow me: Leave everything that concerns only yourself and join me in the immense task of saving the world" (cf. v. 21). Along the path of each person's existence, the Lord has something for each one to do.

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"As the Father sent me, so am I sending you" (Jn. 20:21). These are the words which Jesus addressed to the apostles after his resurrection. These are the words of Christ which guide our reflection during this 10th World Youth Day. Today the church and the pope address these same words to you, the young people of the Philippines, the young people of Asia and Oceania, the young people of the world.

4. Two thousand years of Christianity show that these words have been wonderfully effective. The little community of the first disciples, like a tiny mustard seed, has grown to be like a very big tree (cf. Mt. 13:31-32). This great tree, with its different branches, reaches all the continents, all the countries of the world, the great majority of which are represented here by their delegates. Dear Filipino young people: On that tree your country is an especially strong and healthy branch, stretching out to the whole vast continent of Asia. In the shade of this tree, in the shade of its branches and leaves, the people of the world can find rest. They can gather under its welcoming shade to discover, as you have been doing here during the World Youth Day, the marvelous truth which is at the center of our faith:

That the eternal Word, of one being with the Father, through whom all things were made, became flesh and was born of the Virgin Mary. He dwelt among us. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And from his fullness have we all received grace upon grace (cf. Prologue to the Gospel of St. John).

Through prayer and meditation, this evening vigil is meant to help you to realize more clearly what the extraordinary good news of salvation through Jesus Christ means for your lives. The good news is for everyone. That is why the World Youth Day is held in different places.

5. On Palm Sunday last year in St. Peter's Square in Rome, young Catholics from the United States handed over to representatives of the church in the Philippines the World Youth Day cross. The pilgrim cross goes from one continent to another, and young people from everywhere gather to experience together the fact that Jesus Christ is the same for everyone, and his message is always the same. In him there are no divisions, no ethnic rivalries, no social discrimination. All are brothers and sisters in the one family of God.

This is the beginning of an answer to your question about what the church and the pope expect of the young people of the 10th World Youth Day. Later we shall continue our meditation on the words of Jesus: "As the Father sent me, so am I sending you," and their significance for the young people of the world.

## Part II

6. Your questions this time concern the person and the work of Jesus Christ our redeemer. You feel the mystery of his person drawing you to know him better. You see how his words inspired his disciples to go out and preach the Gospel to every people, thus beginning a mission which continues to this day and which has taken the church to every corner of the world. You want to be sure that if you follow him you will not be let down or disappointed.

In other words, how can we explain the extraordinary effect of his life and the effectiveness of his words? Where do his power and authority come from?

7. (In Spanish) A careful reading of the Gospel of St. John will help us to find an answer to our query. We see Jesus, despite the locked doors, coming into the room where the disciples are gathered (cf. Jn. 20:26). He shows them his hands and his side. What do these hands and this side indicate? They are the signs of the Redeemer's passion and death on the cross. On Good Friday those hands were pierced with nails so that his body could be hung on the cross, between heaven and earth. And when the agony was over, the Roman centurion thrust a lance into his side in order to make sure that he was no longer alive (cf. Jn. 19:34). Immediately blood and water flowed out: a confirmation of death. Jesus had really died. He died and was placed in the tomb in the way that all Israelites were buried. It was the tomb offered by Joseph of Arimathea, who had prepared a family burial place nearby. There Jesus lay until Easter morning. Early that morning certain women came from Jerusalem to anoint the lifeless body. But they found the tomb empty. Jesus had risen.

(In French) So the risen and living Jesus comes to the apostles in the room where they are gathered. And to prove that he is the same one they had always known, he shows them the wounds: his hands and his side.

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These are the marks of his redemptive passion and death, the source of the power which he passes on to them. He says: "As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.... Receive the Holy Spirit" (Jn. 20:21-22).

8. (In Italian) The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the key to the history of the world, to the history of the whole of creation and especially the key to the history of man. Man, like the whole of creation, is subject to the law of death. We read in the Letter to the Hebrews, "It is appointed that men die" (cf. 9:27). But because of what Christ has done, that law has been subjected to another law--the law of life. Because of Christ's resurrection, man no longer exists only for death, he exists for the life which is to be revealed in us. This is the life which Christ brought into the world (cf. Jn. 1:4). Hence the importance of Jesus' birth at Bethlehem, which we have just celebrated at Christmas. For this reason the church is preparing for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000. The human life which was revealed to the shepherds and to the wise men from the East on a starry night in Bethlehem was shown to be indestructible on the day of the resurrection. There is an intimate link between the night of Bethlehem and the day of the resurrection.)

9. The victory of life over death is what every human being desires. All religions, especially the great religious traditions followed by most of the peoples of Asia, bear witness to how deeply the truth regarding our immortality is inscribed in man's religious consciousness. Man's search for life after death finds definitive fulfillment in the resurrection of Christ. Because the risen Christ is the demonstration of God's response to this deeply felt longing of the human spirit, the church professes: "I believe in the resurrection of the body and in life everlasting" (Apostles' Creed). The risen Christ assures the men and women of every age that they are called to a life beyond the frontier of death.

The resurrection of the body is more than just the immortality of the soul. The whole person, body and soul, is destined to eternal life. And eternal life is life in God. Not life in the world, which as St. Paul teaches is "subject to futility" (Rom. 8:20). As a creature in the world, the individual is subject to death, just like every other created being. The immortality of the whole person can come only as a gift from God. It is in fact a sharing in the eternity of God himself.

10. How do we receive this "life in God"? Through the Holy Spirit! Only the Holy Spirit can give this new life, as we profess in the creed: "I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life." Through him we become, in the likeness of the only begotten Son, adopted children of the Father.

When Jesus says, "Receive the Holy Spirit!" he is saying: Receive from me this divine life, the divine adoption which I brought into the world and which I grafted onto human history. I myself, the eternal Son of God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, became the Son of man, born of the Virgin Mary. You, through the power of the same Spirit, must become--in me and through me--adopted sons and daughters of God.

"Receive the Holy Spirit!" means: Accept from me this inheritance of grace and truth, which makes you one spiritual and mystical body with me. "Receive the Holy Spirit!" also means: Become sharers in the kingdom of God, which the Holy Spirit pours into your hearts as the fruit of the suffering and sacrifice of the Son of God, so that more and more God will become all in all (cf. 1 Cor. 15:28).

11. Dear young people: Our meditation has reached the heart of the mystery of Christ the redeemer. Through his total consecration to the Father, he has become the channel of our adoption as the Father's beloved sons and daughters.

The new life which exists in you by reason of baptism is the source of your Christian hope and optimism. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. When he says to you, "As the Father sent me, so am I sending you," you can be certain that he will not let you down; he will be with you always!

### Part III

Dear young friends,

12. The enthronement of Our Lady of Antipolo invites us to look to Mary to see how to respond to Jesus' call. First, she kept all things, pondering them in her heart. She also went in haste to serve her cousin Elizabeth. Both attitudes are essential parts of our response to the Lord: prayer and action. That is what

the church expects of her young people. That is what I have come here to ask of you. Mary, mother of the church and our mother, will help us to hear her divine son.

13. "As the Father sent me, so am I sending you." These words are addressed to you. The church addresses them to all young people around the world. Today, though, they are being addressed especially to the young people of the Philippines; and to the young people of China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam; to the young people of Laos and Cambodia; to those of Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia; to the young people of India and of the islands of the Indian Ocean; to the young people of Australia and New Zealand, and of the islands of the vast Pacific.

Sons and daughters of this part of the world, the home of the greatest part of the human family, you are called to the same task and challenge to which Christ and the church call the young people of every continent: the young people of the Middle East, of Eastern Europe and Western Europe, of North America, of Central and South America, of Africa. To each one of you Christ says, "I am sending you."

14. Why is he sending you? Because men and women the world over-north, south, east and west-long for true liberation and fulfillment. The poor seek justice and solidarity; the oppressed demand freedom and dignity; the blind cry out for light and truth (cf.

Lk. 4:18). You are not being sent to proclaim some abstract truth. The Gospel is not a theory or an ideology! The Gospel is life! Your task is to bear witness to this life: the life of God's adopted sons and daughters. Modern man, whether he knows it or not, urgently needs that life-just as 2,000 years ago humanity was in need of Christ's coming; just as people will always need Jesus Christ until the end of time.

15. Why do we need him? Because Christ reveals the truth about man and man's life and destiny. He shows us our place before God as creatures and sinners, as redeemed through his own death and resurrection, as making our pilgrim way to the Father's house. He teaches the fundamental commandment of love of God and love of neighbor.

He insists that there cannot be justice, brotherhood, peace and solidarity without the Ten Commandments of the covenant, revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai and confirmed by the Lord on the mount of the Beatitudes (cf. Mt. 5:3-12) and in his dialogue with the young man (cf. Mt. 19:16-22).

The truth about man-which the modern world finds so hard to understand-is that we are made in the image and likeness of God himself (cf. Gn. 1:27), and precisely in this fact, apart from any other consideration, lies the inalienable dignity of every human being, without exception, from the moment of conception until death. But what is even- more difficult for contemporary culture to understand is that this dignity, already forged in the creative act of God, is raised immeasurably higher in the mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God. This is the message which you have to proclaim to the modern world, especially to the least fortunate, to the homeless and dispossessed, to the sick, the outcasts, to those who suffer at the hands of others. To each one you must say: Look to Jesus Christ in order to see who you really are in the eyes of God!

16. Increasing attention is being given to the cause of human dignity and human rights, and gradually these are being codified and included in legislation both at national and international levels. For this we should be grateful. But the effective and guaranteed observance of respect for human dignity and human rights will be impossible if individuals and communities do not overcome self-interest, fear, greed and the thirst for power. And for this, man needs to be freed from the dominion of sin through the life of grace: the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Jesus says to you: "I am sending you to your families, to your parishes, to your movements and associations, to your countries, to ancient cultures and modern civilization, so that you will proclaim the dignity of every human being, you will be revealing to the world the true face of Jesus Christ, who is one with every man, every woman and every child, no matter how poor, no matter how weak or handicapped.

17. How does Jesus send you? He promises neither sword, nor money, nor power, nor any of the things which the means of social communications make attractive to people today. He gives you instead grace and truth. He sends you out with the powerful message of his paschal mystery, with the truth of his cross and resurrection. That is all he gives you, and that is all you need.

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This grace and truth will in turn give rise to courage. Following Christ has always demanded courage. The apostles, the martyrs, entire generations of missionaries, saints and confessors- known and unknown, and in every part of the world-have had the strength to stand firm in the face of misunderstanding and adversity. This is also true here in Asia. Among all the peoples of this continent Christians have paid the price of their fidelity-and that is the sure source of the church's confidence.

18. And so we come back to your original question: What does the church and the pope expect of the young people of the 10th World Youth Day? That you confess Jesus Christ. And that you learn to proclaim all that the message of Christ contains for the true liberation and genuine progress of humanity. This is what Christ expects of you.

This is what the church looks for in the young people of the Philippines, of Asia, of the world. In this way your own cultures will find that you speak a language which is already echoed in some way in the ancient traditions of Asia: the language of true interior peace and the fullness of life, now and forever.

Because Christ says to you, "I am sending you," you become a sign of hope and the object of our trust in the future. In a special way you, the young people of the 10th World Youth Day, are a sign, an "epiphany" of Jesus Christ, a manifestation of the kingdom of God.

19. Lord Jesus Christ! Through this 10th World Youth Day, put "new life" into the hearts of the young people gathered here in Luneta Park, in Manila, in the Philippines.

St. John writes that the life you give is the "light of men" (Jn. 1:4). Help these young men and women to take that light back with them to all the places from which they have come. Let their light shine for all peoples (cf. Mt. 5:16): for their families, for their cultures and societies, for their economic and political systems, for the whole international order.

Coming into the room where the disciples were gathered after your resurrection, you said: "Peace be with you!" (Jn. 20:21) Make these young people bearers of your peace.

Teach them the meaning of what you said on the mountain: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons and daughters of God" (cf. Mt. 5:9).

Send them as the Father sent you: to free their brothers and sisters from fear and sin for the glory of our heavenly Father. Amen.

**January 15, 1995**

CLOSING MASS OF THE 10TH WORLD YOUTH DAY

Pope John Paul II

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Homily given on January 15, 1995 in Manila, the Philippines.

1. We are celebrating the Mass of the Santo Nino of Cebu, the child Jesus whose birth at Bethlehem the church has just commemorated at Christmas. Bethlehem signifies the beginning on earth of the mission which the Son received from the Father, the mission which is at the heart of our reflections during this 10th World Youth Day. In today's liturgy we find a magnificent commentary on the theme of the World Youth Day: "As the Father sent me, so am I sending you." Isaiah says, "For there is a child born for us, a son given to us: And dominion is laid on his shoulders" (9:5). That child came from the Father as the Prince of Peace, and his coming brought light into the world (cf. Jn. 1:5).

The prophet goes on: "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; on those who live in a land of deep shadow, a light has shone. You have made their gladness greater, you have made their joy increase" (9:1-2). The happy event which the prophet foretold took place at Bethlehem, the Christmas event which Christians everywhere celebrate with great joy: in Rome, in the Philippines and in all the countries of Asia and throughout the world.

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Dear brothers and sisters of the church in the Philippines, dear young people of the 10th World Youth Day: The deepest source of our joy is the fact that the Father sent the Son to save the world. The Son takes upon himself the weight of the sins of humanity, and in this way redeems us and guides us on the path that leads to union with the Most Blessed Trinity.

2. When we repeat in the responsorial psalm, "Here I am Lord, send me," we hear a distant echo of what the eternal Son said to the Father on coming into the world: "I have come to do your will, O God" (Heb. 10:7). The Father so loved the world that he gave his only Son for man's salvation (cf. Jn. 3:16). In turn, the Son so loved the Father that he made his own the Father's love for sinful and needy humanity. In this eternal dialogue between the Father and the Son, the Son declared his readiness to come into the world to achieve through his passion and death the redemption of mankind.

Today's Gospel is a commentary on how Jesus lived that Messianic mission. It shows us that when Jesus was 12 years old he was already aware of his destiny. Tired after the long search for her Son, Mary said to him: "My child, why have you done this to us?"

See how worried your father and I have been looking for you." And he replied: "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be busy with my Father's affairs?" (Lk. 2:48-49). This awareness deepened and grew in Jesus with the years until it burst forth in all its strength when he began his public preaching. The Father's power at work in him was then gradually revealed in his words and works. It was revealed in a definitive way when he gave himself completely to the Father on the cross. In Gethsemane, the night before his passion, Jesus renewed his obedience. "Father, if it is your will, take this cup from me, yet not my will but yours be done" (Lk. 22:42). He remained faithful to what he had said at 12 years of age: "I must be busy with my Father's affairs. I must do his will."

3. "Here I am Lord, send me." With our gaze fixed on Christ we repeat this verse of the responsorial psalm as the answer of the 10th World Youth Day to what the Lord said to the apostles but now says to everyone: "As the Father sent me, so am I sending you" (Jn.

20:21). These words of Christ have become not just the theme but also the guiding force of this magnificent gathering here in Manila. After last evening's meditation and vigil, this eucharistic sacrifice "consecrates" our response to the Lord; in union with him, all together we reply, "Send me!"

What does this mean? It means that we are ready to do our part in the Lord's mission. Every Christian shares in the mission of Christ in a unique and personal way. Bishops, priests and deacons share in Christ's mission through the ordained ministry. Men and women religious share in it through the spousal love manifested in the spirit of the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty and obedience. The Christian laity share in Christ's mission: the fathers and mothers of families, old people, young people and children; simple people and those who are educated; people who till the soil, factory workers, engineers, technicians, doctors, nurses and health care personnel.

Christ's mission is shared by teachers, by men and women in the legal professions and those who serve in public life. Writers, people who work in the theater and cinema and the media, artists, musicians, sculptors and painters- all have a part in this mission. In this mission there is a role for university professors, scientists, specialists in every field and people in the world of culture. In Christ's mission a part belongs to you, the citizens of the Philippines and people of the Far East: Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Vietnamese, Indians; Christians from Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific; Christians from the Middle East, Europe and Africa, the Americas. Every baptized person has a part in Christ's mission, in the church and through the church.

4. On the 400th anniversary of its ecclesiastical independence and the setting up of its own hierarchical structure, the church in the Philippines is called to a profound renewal. The direction of this renewal has already been indicated in the second plenary council of the Philippines held in 1991. That synod committed the Filipino Catholic community to look more fully to Christ and to find in him its pattern and its inspiration. The synod exhorted the laity to play a fuller role in the church's elevating and liberating service to the human family. The final document says, "All the lay faithful are called to heal and transform society, to prepare the temporal order for the final establishment of the kingdom of God" (No. 435).

5. Within this commitment of the whole people of God, what is the role of young people in continuing the Messianic mission of Christ? We have already meditated on this during the World Youth Day and especially last night at the vigil. I will add one specific challenge and appeal, which involves the healing of a source of immense frustration and suffering in many families all over the world.

Parents and older people sometimes feel that they have lost contact with you, and they are upset, just as Mary and Joseph felt anguish when they realized that Jesus had stayed behind in Jerusalem. Sometimes you are very critical of the world of adults, and sometimes they are very critical of you. This is not something new, and it is not always without a real basis in life. But always remember that you owe your life and upbringing to your parents, and the Fourth Commandment expresses in a concise way the demands of justice toward them (cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2215). In most cases they have provided for your education at the cost of personal sacrifice.

Thanks to them you have been introduced into the cultural and social heritage of your community and country. Generally speaking, your parents have been your first teachers in the faith. Parents therefore have a right to expect from their sons and daughters the mature fruits of their efforts, just as children and young people have the right to expect from their parents the love and care which lead to a healthy development. I am asking you to build bridges of dialogue and communication with your parents. Be a healthy influence on society to help to break down the barriers which have been raised between generations!

How many young people think they are free because they have thrown off every restraint and every principle of responsibility? How many of them think that because certain forms of behavior are socially accepted they are therefore morally right? They abuse the beautiful gift of sexuality; they abuse drink and drugs, thinking that such behavior is all right because certain sectors of society tolerate it. Objective moral norms are abandoned under peer pressure and under the pervasive influence of trends and fashions publicized by the media. Millions of young people the world over are falling into subtle but real forms of moral slavery.

6. Build your lives on the one model that will not deceive you! I invite you to open the Gospel and discover that Jesus Christ wants to be your "friend" (cf. Jn. 15:14). He wants to be your "companion" at every stage on the road of life (cf. Lk. 24:13-35). He wants to be the "way," your path through the anxieties, doubts, hopes and dreams of happiness (cf. Jn. 14:6).

He is the "truth" that gives meaning to your efforts and your struggles. He wants to give you "life," as he gave new life to the young man of Nain (cf. Lk. 7:11-17), and gave a whole new future to Zacchaeus, who was dead in spirit through ambition and greed (cf. Lk. 19:1-10). He is your "resurrection," your victory over sin and death, the fulfillment of your desire to live forever (cf. Jn. 11:25). Because of this he will be your "joy," the "rock" on which your weakness will be turned into strength and optimism.

He is our salvation, our hope and happiness and peace. When Christ becomes all of this for you, the world and the church will have solid reasons for hope for the future. For on you will depend the third millennium, which sometimes appears as a marvelous new epoch for humanity but which also raises not a few fears and anxieties. I say this as one who has lived through a large portion of the 20th century, which is now coming to an end. In this century many sad and destructive things have happened, but at the same time we have experienced so many good things which sustain our hope and optimism. The future depends on your maturity! The church looks to the future with confidence when she hears from your lips the same answer that Jesus gave Mary and Joseph when they found him in the temple: "Did you not know that I must be busy with my Father's affairs?" (Lk. 2:49)

7. Dear young people: The 10th World Youth Day is coming to a close. It is time to commit yourselves more fully to following Christ in the fulfillment of his saving mission. Every form of the apostolate and every kind of service must have its source in Christ. When he says, "As the Father sent me, so am I sending you" (Jn. 20:21), he also makes you capable of this mission. In a sense he shares himself with you. This is precisely what St. Paul writes about: God chose us in Christ before the world began, to be holy and blameless in his sight, to be full of love; he likewise predestined us through Christ Jesus to be his adopted sons and daughters (cf. Eph. 1:4-5). It is precisely through the grace of being the adopted children of God



that we are capable of taking up the mission entrusted to us by Christ. We must leave Luneta Park with a more confident awareness of this extraordinary fact!

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever" (Heb. 13:8). If you take up his cause and the mission which he gives you, then the whole human family and the church in every part of the world can look to the third millennium with hope and trust.

Dear young people of the Philippines, of Asia, of the Far East and of the entire world: Be a sign of hope for the church, for your countries and for all humanity! May your light spread out from Manila to the farthest corners of the world, like the "great light" which shone in the night at Bethlehem. Be sons and daughters of the light!

8. Dear people of God in the Philippines, go forth in the power of the Holy Spirit to renew the face of the earth—your own world first, your families, your communities and the nation to which you belong and which you love; and the wider world of Asia, toward which the church in the Philippines has a special responsibility before the Lord; and the world beyond, working through faith for the renewal of God's whole creation (cf. Acts and Decrees of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines, 7).

May God who began this work in you—400 years ago—bring it to completion in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ! (cf. Phil. 1:6). Amen.

**June 30, 1995**

RESPOND GENEROUSLY TO CHRIST'S CALL

Pope John Paul II

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To Young People of Slovakia June 30, 1995

Praised be Jesus Christ!

I greet Mr. Kovac, President of the Slovak Republic, Mr. Gasparovic, President of the Slovak Parliament, Mr. Meciar, Prime Minister of the Government, and the welcome guests. I greet all my young friends.

Now I will say something to you in Polish, so that you can understand: we are not afraid of the rain! We are not afraid of the rain because there isn't any. But not so long ago I was in Moravia, in Olomouc, and there it was very different from today.

There the young people were able to say at Svaty Kopecek: we are not afraid of the rain!

1. Dear Young Friends! In the Gospel passage just proclaimed, we heard that some Greeks wished to see Jesus. The two holy brothers from Thessalonica, Cyril and Methodius, were Greek too. Thanks to their apostolic commitment, the Spirit brought the good seed of the Gospel to this land of yours, where your ancestors had made known their wish to know Christ. Prince Rastislav expressed this wish by sending messengers to Constantinople. And it was on this soil that the holy Brothers sowed the seed, giving their lives in order to plant the kingdom of God and make it grow.

Dear young people, the youth of this country, you are a new harvest of God's field, of that great harvest which goes back to the days when the saints from Thessalonica preached the Gospel here. In order to be worthy followers of theirs, accept the challenge of devoting yourselves with generosity to the work of the new evangelization, thus forming a bridge between the second and third Christian millennia.

Nitra speaks to us of the first millennium: the first Christian church of Eastern Central Europe was built nearby; here, since the year 828, wheat has become, in the Eucharist, the Body of Christ, which unites in itself all who receive it with faith. This is why I have wished to visit Nitra: this Diocese was erected while St. Methodius was still living, and the cathedral which dominates the city is one of the most ancient episcopal sees in the Slav nations. Here was born Gorazd, "a man of your land, well versed ... and orthodox", the trusted disciple whom Methodius chose as his successor.

I am deeply moved as I gaze upon Zabor. On its slopes about the year 1000 the monastery of St. Hippolytus was built, where my fellow countryman St. Andrew Svorad and his disciple St. Benedict, the heavenly patrons of your city and Diocese, received their training. These, and so many other lesser known heroes of the faith—I think, for example, for the holy Bishop Bystrík—are like seeds fallen in the fertile soil of Nitra, a soil of heralds and intrepid apostles of Christ.

2. It is on this blessed soil that I meet you today, dear young friends from the Dioceses of Slovakia! I greet all of you with affection, together with the Bishop of Nitra, Cardinal Jan Chryzostom Korec, his Auxiliary, Bishop Frantisek Rabek, the other Bishops present, and all your priests. I also greet the young people from neighbouring countries: from Bohemia and Moravia, from Austria, Hungary, and Poland; I greet the Rom youth as well. I am pleased to see the representatives of those doing their military service. My special greeting goes to those who, for different reasons, could not be present but are spiritually united with us.

Dear friends, like the Greeks spoken of in the Gospel passage we have just heard, you too wish to "see Jesus". Christ, the Son of God and Redeemer of mankind, fully responds to the deepest desires of the human heart. He came so that "we might have life and have it abundantly" (cf. Jn 10:10). He has "the words of eternal life" (Jn 14:6).

Many of you are convinced of this. Many have also paid personally for their fidelity to Christ. Others, perhaps, have not been able to come to a deep knowledge of Christ and the Church because this was denied to them, and now they have many questions about the faith. Others are still unsure, confused and in danger of giving in to the deceptive appeal of short-lived and passing currents of thought.

3. As we read in the Gospel, the Greeks, in order to meet Jesus, approached Philip, one of the Twelve. Jesus entrusted the authentic witness of his truth to the Apostles. Do you remember what happened when people heard his words? Many of his followers turned away. Jesus asked the Twelve: "Do you also wish to go away?" It was Peter who replied: "Lord, to whom shall we go?"

You have the words of eternal life; and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God" (Jn 6:68- 69), the Messiah. Jesus himself made it clear that this proclamation of faith by Peter was a gift from the heavenly Father. And precisely on this faith the Church was built (cf. Mt 16:16-18). Jesus prayed for Peter's faith, in order that he might be able to confirm his brothers (cf. Lk 22:32).

This is why the successor of Peter visits the Churches spread throughout the world, and why he is present today in your midst. And you yourselves have come to me with a wish like that of the Greeks who went to the Apostle Philip and said: "We wish to see Jesus". Yes, dear friends, you can find the true knowledge of Jesus only in communion with the successors of the Apostles, united in the same faith with the Successor of Peter.

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb 13:8). Dear young friends, make your own the apostolic faith of the Church! Remain united with your Bishops, listen to them, meet the priests, in the parishes and in the schools. Deepen your knowledge of Christ under their guidance, be assiduous in listening to the word of God, in prayer, in receiving the sacraments, especially the Eucharist and Penance. This is something I say to young people in every country, above all in the World Youth Meetings, and this is what I repeat to you, dear Slovak friends!

4. When faith is authentic personal fidelity to Christ and the Gospel, it becomes incarnate in life. Jesus says as much: "Whoever loves me will keep my word" (Jn 14:23). To keep the Lord's word is to carry out the mission which has been given to us. In Manila we paused to consider this truth, reflecting on it with young people from all over the world. We were guided by the words which the risen Lord spoke to the Apostles: "As the Father sent me, so am I sending you" (Jn 20:21). This mandate is addressed to each Christian, each one of you! Nitra was once the site of a powerful missionary movement. Dear young friends, yours is the task of reviving that ancient enthusiasm. Jesus puts his trust in you. Through you he wishes to reach every part of society and transform it with the power of his truth and love. You are not alone in this mission. The Holy Spirit is with you.

Before he died, St. Cyril asked for the gift of the Spirit to be given to the Christians of this land; he prayed in these words: "Pour into their hearts the word of your sonship". Only those who have received within themselves the new life of the Spirit and who act as children of God can be a seed of new life. So open your hearts, dear young friends, to this divine breath, to this sharing in the life and the love of God!

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, who gives life to the Mystical Body of the Church. In order to be enlivened by the Spirit, you need to be united to the Church. Those who reject the Church in the name of the Spirit are deceiving themselves. Only the person who loves the Church and works for her unity is moved by the Spirit of God and walks according to the Gospel.

5. Dear friends, be conscious of the priceless gift which God has given you: it has come to you down the long road of the generations from the time of Sts. Cyril and Methodius. Welcome it with responsible freedom and commit yourselves to developing it. When you are faced with the radical demands of the Gospel, do not pull back! Remember that the Spirit of God within you is stronger than the spirit of the world (cf. 1 Jn 4:4). With the Spirit's help, you can be filled with joy in keeping the commandments.

Do not confuse freedom with individualism! There is no genuine freedom without love for others. Christians live freedom as a service, convinced that the development of an authentic civilization depends on this, in Europe and throughout the world.

Sts. Cyril and Methodius paid with their lives for their refusal to subject the faith to partisan interests. Faith always defends true freedom and denounces slavery, whether physical or moral.

Physical forms of slavery are more easily recognized than moral slavery, but moral slavery is no less dangerous. There is in fact a slavery which is imposed by others and a slavery which people impose upon themselves. Young Slovaks, keep your eyes wide open! Do not let yourselves be trapped by a false freedom, which in the name of an apparent well-being spreads indifference and relativism which deprives consciences of the values which give meaning to life. At the level of society too, freedom should not be confused with nationalism. The variety of cultures is a heritage which needs to be preserved with great mutual respect and effective cooperation. Reject all temptations to violence and racism. Work for peace, dialogue and solidarity.

6. Be ready to respond generously to Christ's call!

Especially you, dear young people who have received the gift of a vocation to the priestly or religious life. Dear seminarians, dear novices, prepare yourselves conscientiously to serve the Lord and your brothers and sisters by following the example of Sts. Cyril and Methodius.

You too, dear young people who are called to marriage and family life, must be ready to respond to Christ's call. This is also a magnificent vocation! Learn true love from Christ, a love which is demanding, not closed in the search for selfish pleasure, but open to the giving of self. With this interior disposition you will be able to form families which are authentic sanctuaries of love, where human life is welcomed and cared for from its very first moments to its natural end.

Many of you are preparing for work and for a task in society, others are already at work. Whatever you do, act always with great commitment and competence, faithful to Christian morality and ready to be of service the civil and political order, always keeping in mind the common good. Can we overlook those young people who are enduring difficulties of various types: unemployment, sickness, invalidity, discouragement?

Christ, who accepted the Cross to free us from sin, is particularly close to those who feel its burden, and when they are tested he strengthens them with his Spirit.

Dear friends, Christ has repeated to us today: "If anyone wishes to serve me, he must follow me" (Jn 12:26). And for our consolation he adds: "The Father will honour whoever serves me" (ibid.). This was the case with Sts. Cyril and Methodius and with so many other saints of the Slav-speaking lands: the Father has honoured them. This is what will happen also with the three Martyrs of Kosice, when, in two days' time, I

proclaim them saints for all the Church: they followed Christ, and the Father has honoured them before the whole world.

Can we trust in Christ's words? Can we accept the demands they make and follow him so as to serve him? Yes, we know this: only in the Holy Spirit can it be done. I pray to almighty God for each one of you and for all the young people who live in this land below the Tatra Mountains: "Pour into their hearts, Lord, the word of your sonship!"

With all my heart I bless you and your families.

**October 7, 1995**

HOMILY AT CENTRAL PARK

Pope John Paul II

Visit to the United Nations and the United States: given on October 7, 1995

"Come Holy Spirit...!"

Dear Friends in Christ,

1. Today's liturgy is full of references to the Holy Spirit. Even as we pray for the Spirit to come among us, he is already here. He is here in so many of you. He is here above all in the action of the Mass, the most sacred rite of our Faith. You are here, I trust, not out of simple curiosity to see the Pope, but because of the Mass, because the Holy Spirit is leading us all to Christ!

For me it is a great joy to look out at so many wonderful people; and to greet Cardinal O'Connor and all the Bishops from the New York Metropolitan Province and elsewhere; as well as all the priests, religious and laity of the Archdiocese, and the civil authorities of the State and City of New York. My warm and affectionate greetings go to the sick and the handicapped among us. And it is especially wonderful to see so many young people. I can hardly believe we are not back in Denver, which was such an enriching experience. So many thousands of young people astonished everyone with their spirit and their faith. I remember clearly that many people wondered and worried that the young people of America would not come to the World Youth Day, or, if they did come, that they would be a problem. Instead, the young people's joy, their hunger for the truth, their desire to be united all together in the Body of Christ, made clear to everyone that many, very many young people of America have values and ideals which seldom make the headlines. Is it any wonder that the Pope loves you!

[In Castilian:] El Papa ama tambien a los hijos e hijas de la Iglesia de lengua espanola. Muchos de ustedes han nacido aqui o han vivido mucho tiempo aqui. Otros han llegado mas recientemente. Pero todos llevan las huellas de su herencia cultural, profundamente arraigadas en la tradicion catolica. Conserven vivas esa fe y esa cultura.

[The Pope also loves the sons and daughters of the Church who speak Spanish! Many of you have been born here or have lived here for a long time. Others are more recent arrivals. But you all bear the mark of your cultural heritage, deeply rooted in the Catholic tradition. Keep alive that faith and culture!]

I know this is not Denver; this is New York! The great New York! This is Central Park. The beautiful surroundings of Central Park invite us to reflect on a more sublime beauty: the beauty of every human being, made in the image and likeness of God (cf. Gen 1:26), and the beauty that is God living in our hearts through the Holy Spirit. At Denver we meditated on this new life: "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (Jn 10:10). In Manila, last January, millions of young people gathered to meditate on how that new life in the Holy Spirit makes us apostles of Christ's kingdom: "As the Father has sent me, so am I sending you" (Jn 20:21). Now, today, here in Central Park we are continuing the same spiritual pilgrimage, getting ready for the next World Youth Day, in Paris in 1997. I am very grateful for all that is being done in parishes and dioceses all over the world to bring young people into the spirit of this great spiritual pilgrimage across the world, which started in Rome in 1984, then brought us to Buenos Aires in Argentina, to Santiago de Compostela in Spain, to Jasna Gora and Czestochowa in Poland, to Denver, to Manila, and next to Paris. At the ecumenical level, a similar spiritual pilgrimage is made at Taizé in France. The driving force of all this movement of young people is always the Holy Spirit.

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2. The Spirit of God who, we are told in the Book of Genesis, breathed upon the waters at the very beginning of creation (cf. 1:2), is the same Spirit of life who was breathed into man, so that "man became a living being" (ibid., 2:7). This is what makes us different from every other creature. In our bodies we are a mere speck in the vast created universe, but by virtue of our souls we transcend the whole material world. I invite you to reflect on what makes each one of you truly marvelous and unique. Only a human being like you can think and speak and share your thoughts in different languages with other human beings all over the world, and through that language express the beauty of art and poetry and music and literature and the theater, and so many other uniquely human accomplishments. And most important of all, only God's precious human beings are capable of loving. Love makes us seek what is good; love makes us better persons. It is love that prompts men and women to marry and form a family, to have children. It is love that prompts others to embrace the religious life or become priests. Love makes you reach out to others in need, whoever they are, wherever they are. Every genuine human love is a reflection of the Love that is God himself, to the point where the First Letter of Saint John says: "The man without love has known nothing of God; for God is love" (4:8).

3. Today is the Feast of the Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The readings of the Mass introduce us to the first three Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary, three fundamental moments of salvation history, three stages along the way of the Holy Spirit's creative passage through human history: the Annunciation, the Visitation and the Birth of Jesus. In the first reading, Saint Paul writes to the Galatians: "But when the designated time had come, God sent forth his Son born of a woman" (4:4). In these few words Saint Paul tells us what Saint Luke describes at greater length in the Gospel: the visit of the Archangel Gabriel to a virgin named Mary, in the town of Nazareth in Galilee. He invites her to become the Mother of the Redeemer. The Gospel tells us not only that Mary was surprised and confused by the words of the angel, but that she was afraid. Yes, Mary was afraid, just as we are often afraid! And the angel said, "Do not fear, Mary. For you have found favor with God" (Lk 1:30). It is the power of the Most High that will come upon you, and by the power of the Holy Spirit you will become the Mother of the Son of God (cf. Lk 1:35-37).

If the creative power of God is at work at the moment of conception of every human being, in the Annunciation the Spirit accomplished something incomparably greater. In the womb of the Virgin Mary the Spirit created a man, to be born nine months later in Bethlehem, who, from the first moment of his conception, was the Eternal Son of the Father, the Word through whom all things visible and invisible were made (cf. Jn 1:3)—Eternal Wisdom, the Archetype of everything that exists in creation.

4. When Mary realized who it was that was calling her, all fear was banished and she replied: "I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you say" (Lk 1:38). And at that instant, she became the Mother of the Son of God. This is the extraordinary truth that we meditate on in the first Mystery of the Rosary, the Annunciation.

All this happened so that, as Saint Paul says, we might be redeemed and might receive adoption as God's sons and daughters (cf. Gal 4:5). In Christ, the Holy Spirit makes us God's beloved children. The Incarnation of the Son of God happened once, and is unrepeatable. Divine adoption goes on all the time, through the Church, the Body of Christ, and particularly through the Sacraments, through Baptism, Penance, the Eucharist, and of course the Sacrament of Pentecost that we call Confirmation. And then Saint Paul writes something very striking: the proof that we are God's children is that he "has sent forth into our hearts the Spirit of his Son, which cries out 'Abba!' ('Father!')" (Gal 4:6). Abba! Father! This is our prayer every time we say the Our Father. But we have to say it in the Spirit, with a clear awareness that in Christ "we are no longer slaves but children, and therefore heirs with Christ to his kingdom" (cf. Gal 4:7). This new condition of ours as Christians, that is, our transformation through grace and our sharing in divine life itself, will reach its fulfillment in eternity. Then we shall share the happiness with which God himself is happy, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Do you see how important it is to invoke the Holy Spirit and to allow him to work in us? We must remember that the Holy Spirit can do great things for us! And the Holy Spirit does great things for us every day.

5. [In Castilian:] La proxima etapa del pasaje del Espiritu Santo es el Misterio gozoso de la Visitacion. Impulsada por el Espiritu Santo, que destierra su temor, y llena de amor a su prima Isabel, que habia concebido un hijo en su vejez, Maria deja inmediatamente la seguridad de su propio hogar y acude a ayudar a Isabel. Imaginad la sorpresa de Maria al escuchar a su prima decir: "¿De donde a mi que la madre de mi

Señor venga a mi? Porque, apenas llego a mis oídos la voz de tu saludo, salto de gozo el niño en mi seno" (Lc 1:43-44). Ese niño era Juan el Bautista, el mayor de los Profetas, el que daría testimonio de Jesús al comienzo de su vida pública. Entonces María pronunció las palabras del Magnificat, un hermoso himno de gratitud y alabanza: *«Engrandece mi alma al Señor y mi espíritu se alegra en Dios mi salvador»* (Lc 1:46-47). A lo largo de los tiempos, la Iglesia repite todos los días el Magnificat en lo que llamamos la Liturgia de las Horas. Tal vez las palabras más importantes de ese admirable himno son: "Ha hecho en mi favor maravillas el Poderoso, Santo es su nombre" (Lc 1:49). [The next stage of the Holy Spirit's passage is the Joyful Mystery of the Visitation. Moved by the Holy Spirit, who banished her fear, and filled with love for her cousin Elizabeth, who was an older woman and pregnant, Mary immediately left the security of her own home and went to help Elizabeth. Imagine Mary's surprise to hear her cousin say, "But who am I that the mother of my Lord should come to me? The moment your greeting sounded in my ears, the baby leapt for joy" (Lk 1:43-44). That infant was John the Baptist, the greatest of the Prophets, the one who would proclaim Jesus at the beginning of his public life.

[Then Mary uttered the words of the beautiful hymn of gratitude and praise, the Magnificat: "My being proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit finds joy in God my savior" (Lk 1:46- 47). Down the ages the Church repeats the Magnificat every day in what we call the Liturgy of the Hours. Perhaps the most important words of this wonderful hymn are: "God who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name" (Lk 1:49).]

6. Like Mary, you must not be afraid to allow the Holy Spirit to help you become intimate friends of Christ. Like Mary, you must put aside any fear, in order to take Christ to the world in whatever you do—in marriage, as single people in the world, as students, as workers, as professional people. Christ wants to go to many places in the world, and to enter many hearts, through you. Just as Mary visited Elizabeth, so you too are called to "visit" the needs of the poor, the hungry, the homeless, those who are alone or ill; for example those suffering from AIDS. You are called to stand up for life! To respect and defend the mystery of life always and everywhere, including the lives of unborn babies, giving real help and encouragement to mothers in difficult situations. You are called to work and pray against abortion, against violence of all kinds, including the violence done against women's and children's dignity through pornography. Stand up for the life of the aged and the handicapped, against attempts to promote assisted-suicide and euthanasia! Stand up for marriage and family life! Stand up for purity! Resist the pressures and temptations of a world that too often tries to ignore a most fundamental truth: that every life is a gift from God our Creator, and that we must give an account to God of how we use it either for good or evil.

7. There is yet another stage of the Holy Spirit's passage through history which we should meditate on: the third Joyful Mystery of the Rosary, the birth of the Son of God, announced by Angels to the Shepherds. "You have nothing to fear ... This day in David's City a savior has been born to you ... in a manger you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes" (Lk 2:10-12). Saint Luke tells us that the Shepherds said to one another: "Let us go over and see this Child" (cf. Lk 2:15). And they went and found the Child with Mary and Joseph. That is what we too must do! We must go to this Child, this Man, the Son of God, at whatever inconvenience, at whatever risk to ourselves, because to know and love him will truly change our lives.

I remember a song I used to sing in Poland as a young man, a song which I still sing as Pope, which tells about the birth of the Savior. On Christmas night, in every church and chapel, this song would ring out, repeating in a musical way the story told in the Gospel. It says: "In the silence of the night, a voice is heard: 'Get up, shepherds, God is born for you! Hurry to Bethlehem to meet the Lord'". The same story is told in the beautiful hymn, "Silent Night", which everyone knows. That is a hymn which moves us deeply by reminding us that Jesus, the Son of God, was born of Mary, born to make us holy and to make us adopted sons and daughters of God. It is a hymn to the creative power of the Holy Spirit. It is a song to help us not to be afraid.

8. If I speak of Christmas, it is because in less than five years we shall reach the end of the Second Millennium, two thousand years since the birth of Christ on that first Christmas night in Bethlehem. We must allow the Holy Spirit to prepare us for this important event, which is another significant stage of his passage through history and of our pilgrimage of faith.

Your Archbishop, Cardinal O'Connor, has given me the welcome news that the Church in New York will begin to prepare for the Millennium by declaring 1996 a Year of Evangelization. What a wonderful beginning, to make a mighty year-long effort to transmit the teaching and the love of Christ to all who will listen, especially to those who, for some reason, may have wandered away or been alienated from the Church. Cardinal O'Connor will need all of you, and especially you young people, to help the Church enter the Third Millennium. You young people will live most of your lives in the next Millennium. You must help the Holy Spirit to shape its social, moral and spiritual character. You must transmit your joy in being adopted sons and daughters of God through the creative power of the Holy Spirit. Do this with the help of Mary, Mother of Jesus. Cling to her Rosary, and you will never wander far from her side.

The Pope asks you to do this. He knows that you will do this, and for this he loves you. Then you can tell the whole world that you gave the Pope his Christmas present in October, in New York, in Central Park. Do not be afraid! The power of the Holy Spirit is with you!

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful! Enkindle in them the fire of your love! Amen.

**November 26, 1995**

MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER  
POPE JOHN PAUL II  
FOR THE XI WORLD YOUTH DAY

"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (Jn 6: 68).

Dear Young People,

1. "I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you, that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine" (Rom 1:1112).

The Apostle Paul's words to the Christians of Rome summarize the sentiment with which I address you all, as we begin to prepare ourselves for the 11th World Youth Day.

Indeed, I come in spirit to you with this same wish, to meet you in every corner of the earth, wherever you face the intense, daily adventure of life: in your families, where you study or work, in the communities where you gather to hear the word of the Lord and to open your hearts to him in prayer.

My gaze turns in particular to the young people who are personally involved in too many of the tragedies that still wound humanity: those suffering from war, from violence, from hunger and poverty, thus prolonging the suffering of Christ who, with his Passion, is close to those oppressed by the burden of pain and injustice.

In 1996 World Youth Day will take place in diocesan communities, as usual, in expectation of the new world meeting that will take us to Paris in 1997.

The future belongs to the younger generation

2. We are journeying towards the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, an appointment for which in my Apostolic Letter Tertio millennio adveniente I invited the whole Church to prepare with conversion of heart and life.

I also ask you now to undertake this preparation with the same spirit and goals. I entrust to you a plan of action which, based on the words of the Gospel and corresponding to the themes presented to the whole Church for each year, will serve as a guide for the next World Youth Days:

1997: "Teacher, where are you staying? Come and see" (Jn 1:38-39).

1998: "The Holy Spirit will teach you all things" (Jn 14:26).

1999: "The Father loves you" (Jn 16:27).

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2000: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn 1:14).

3. I am appealing especially to you, young people, to look to the epochal threshold of the Year 2000, remembering that "the future of the world and the Church belongs to the younger generation, to those who, born in this century, will reach maturity in the next, the first century of the new millennium.... If they succeed in following the road which he points out to them, they will have the joy of making their own contribution to his presence in the next century" (Tertio millennio adveniente, n. 58).

As we approach the Great Jubilee, may you be accompanied by the conciliar Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, which I want to recommend to all of you, as I did to your peers from the European continent in Loreto last September. It is a "valuable and ever youthful document.... Reread it attentively. You will find in it the light to discern your vocation as men and women called to live in this both marvellous and dramatic era, as artisans of brotherhood and builders of peace" (Angelus, 10 September 1995; *L'Osservatore Romano* English edition, 13 September, p. 2, n. 2).

4. "Lord, to whom shall we go?". The goal and target of our life is he, the Christ, who awaits us — each one singly and all together — to lead us across the boundaries of time to the eternal embrace of the God who loves us.

But if eternity is our horizon as people starving for truth and thirsting for happiness, history is the setting of our daily commitment. Faith teaches us that man's destiny is written in the heart and mind of God, who directs the course of history. It also teaches us that the Father puts in our hands the task of beginning to build here on earth the "kingdom of heaven" which the Son came to announce and which will find its fulfilment at the end of time.

It is our duty then to live in history, side by side with our peers, sharing their worries and hopes, because the Christian is and must be fully a man of his time. He cannot escape into another dimension, ignoring the tragedies of his era, closing his eyes and heart to the anguish that pervades life. On the contrary, it is he who, although not "of" this world, is immersed "in" this world every day, ready to hasten to wherever there is a brother in need of help, a tear to be dried, a request for help to be answered. On this will we be judged!

Charity is the high road to the Great Jubilee

5. Remembering the Master's warning: "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me" (Mt 25:35-36), we must put the "new commandment" into practice (Jn 13:34).

Thus we will oppose what today seems to be the "disintegration of civilization", in order vigorously to reaffirm the "civilization of love" which alone can open to the men of our time horizons of true peace and lasting justice in lawfulness and solidarity.

Charity is also the high road that must lead us to the goal of the Great Jubilee. To reach this appointment, we need to be able to confront ourselves and undertake a rigorous examination of conscience, the indispensable premiss for a radical conversion, which can transform our life and give it an authentic meaning which enables believers to love God with all their heart, with all their soul and with all their strength, and to love their neighbour as themselves (cf. Lk 10:27).

By conforming your daily life to the Gospel of the one Teacher who has "the words of eternal life", you will be able to become genuine workers for justice, following the commandment which makes love the new "frontier" of Christian witness. This is the law for transforming the world (cf. *Gaudium et spes*, n. 38).

6. It is first of all necessary for you young people to give a forceful witness of love for life, God's gift. This love must extend from the beginning to the end of every life and must struggle against every attempt to make man the arbiter of his brother's life, of unborn life, of life that is waning or that of the handicapped and the weak.



I ask you young people, who naturally and instinctively make your "love of life" the horizon of your dreams and the rainbow of your hopes, to become "prophets of life". Be such by your words and deeds, rebelling against the civilization of selfishness that often considers the human person a means rather than an end, sacrificing its dignity and feelings in the name of mere profit. Do so by concretely helping those who need you and who perhaps, without your help, would be tempted to resign themselves to despair.

Life is a talent (cf. Mt 25:14-30) entrusted to us so that we can transform it and increase it, making it a gift to others. No man is an iceberg drifting on the ocean of history. Each one of us belongs to a great family, in which he has his own place and his own role to play. Selfishness makes people deaf and dumb; love opens eyes and hearts, enabling people to make that original and irreplaceable contribution which, together with the thousands of deeds of so many brothers and sisters, often distant and unknown, converges to form the mosaic of charity which can change the tide of history.

Be prophets of life, love and joy!

7. "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life".

When, considering his language too demanding, many of his disciples left him Jesus asked the few who had remained: "Will you also go away?"; Peter answered him: "Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (Jn 6:67-68). And they chose to remain with him. They stayed because the Master had "the words of eternal life", words which, while promising eternity, gave full meaning to life.

There are times and circumstances when it is necessary to make decisive choices for the whole of life. We are experiencing, and you know it, difficult times in which it is often hard to distinguish good from evil, true teachers from the false. Jesus warned us: "Take heed that you are not led astray; for many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he!' and, 'the time is at hand!'. Do not go after them" (Lk 21:8). Pray and listen to his words; let yourselves be guided by true pastors; do not ever succumb to the world's flattery and facile illusions which frequently become tragic disappointments.

It is in the difficult moments, in moments of trial, that the quality of decisions is measured. Thus it is in this difficult time that each one of you will be called to have the courage of your decision. There are no short cuts to happiness and light. The torment of all those who, throughout the history of humanity, have tirelessly sought the meaning of life, answers to the fundamental questions written on the heart of every human being, are proof of this.

You know that these questions are no more than the expression of a longing for the infinite, which God himself has planted in each one of us. Thus it is with a sense of duty and sacrifice that you must walk the paths of conversion, commitment, research, work, volunteer service, dialogue, respect for all, without giving up in the face of failure, knowing that your strength lies in the Lord who guides your steps with love and is ready to welcome you like the prodigal son (cf. Lk 15:11-24).

8. Dear young people, I have asked you to be "prophets of life and love". I also ask you to be "prophets of joy": the world must recognize us by our ability to communicate to our peers the sign of a great hope which has already been fulfilled: Jesus, who for our sake died and rose again.

Do not forget that "the future of humanity is in the hands of those men who are capable of providing the generations to come with reasons for life and optimism" (Gaudium et spes, n. 31).

Purified by reconciliation, fruit of divine love and of your sincere repentance, striving for justice and living in thanksgiving to God, you can be credible and effective prophets of joy in a world so frequently gloomy and sad. You will be heralds of the "fullness of time", whose timeliness is recalled by the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000.

The way Jesus shows you is not easy. Rather, it is like a path winding up a mountain. Do not lose heart! The steeper the road, the faster it rises towards ever wider horizons. May Mary, Star of Evangelization, guide you! Docile like her to the Father's will, take the stages of history as mature and convincing witnesses.

With her and with the Apostles may you repeat at every moment your profession of faith in Jesus Christ's live-giving presence: "You have the words of eternal life!".

From the Vatican, 26 November 1995, Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe.

# 1996

**March 31, 1996**

THE CROSS OF CHRIST IS THE WORLD'S HOPE

Pope John Paul II

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Holy Father celebrates Palm Sunday liturgy for 11th World Youth Day 31 March 1996

1. "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord" (Entrance antiphon).

Palm Sunday, when the Church recalls Christ's triumphal entrance into Jerusalem, is a solemn gateway as it were leading to Holy Week. Looking at this day from the standpoint of liturgical spirituality, we can consider it as somehow present in every Eucharistic celebration. Just as in its time it was the threshold of the events of Christ's paschal week, so it continues as the threshold of the Eucharistic mystery. Indeed, the very threshold of the liturgy. The moment we cross this threshold, we approach the centre of the *Mysterium fide*.

This *Mysterium* is "always and everywhere" celebrated and accomplished by Christ himself, through the service of the priest, minister of the Eucharist. Christ himself, the Eternal High Priest, arrives in Jerusalem to complete his one sacrifice, the sacrifice of the New Covenant: first as a sacrament at the Last Supper on Holy Thursday; then as a redeeming reality on Calvary.

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

This Week is filled with the sufferings of Christ

2. His coming is a revelation, a radical, total revelation of God's holiness. "Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth". "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might. Heaven and earth are full of your glory...".

Precisely this Week which humanly speaking is filled to the brim with suffering, humiliation, despoliation, in a word, with the kenosis of God this Week contains the revelation of God's holiness, the culmination of world history. "Holy, Holy, Holy.... Hosanna in the highest".

From the depth of Christ's redemptive humiliation, man is given the gift of strength to reach the summit of his own being and destiny. On this day and in this Week, rightly called "Holy", the "Hosanna in the highest" achieves its full meaning.

3. For 11 years World Youth Day has been celebrated on Palm Sunday. In a certain sense it could be said that "youth day" began to be such from the beginning, from the day we are commemorating today, when the young people of Jerusalem went out to meet Christ as he entered the city, meek and humble, riding on an ass, according to the prophecy of Zechariah (cf. Zec 9:9). They went to greet him and to welcome him with the words of the psalm: "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord..." (Ps 117 [118]:26).

Christ does not forget. He remembers everything that happened then. And young people remember too. Christ is faithful. And young people also know how to be faithful to whoever puts trust in them.

This is why young people return, year after year, to this meeting which arose from their irrepressible enthusiasm for Jesus and the Gospel. Thus began a pilgrimage which passes through the Dioceses of the whole world and, every two years, comes together in a great international meeting, building bridges of

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brotherhood and hope between continents, peoples and cultures. It is a journey always in motion, like life. Like youth.

This year the halfway point, so to speak, between the unforgettable stop in Manila and that planned for Paris in August 1997 the young people's" journey once again pauses in the local Churches, a journey also enriched by the experience of the European pilgrimage to the Holy House of Loreto.

The Cross is the word of eternal life

4. Dear young people present today in St Peter's Square, to you my special greeting! I extend a warm welcome to all who have come from afar, particularly to the Filipino young people, who will shortly hand over the World Youth Day Cross to their French friends.

To embrace the Cross on this day, to pass it from hand to hand, is a very eloquent gesture. It is like saying: Lord, we do not want to stay with you only at the time of the "Hosannas", but with your help we want to accompany you on the way of the Cross as did Mary, your mother and ours, and the Apostle John. Yes, O Lord, because "You have the words of eternal life" (Jn 6:68), and we have believed that precisely your Cross is the word of life, of eternal life!

Dear friends, you know well that the Lord does not mislead us with deceptive mirages of happiness, but says: "If any man wishes to come after me, let him ... take up his cross and follow me" (Mk 8:34). This language is harsh but sincere, and it contains the basic truth for life: only love fulfils man and there is no love without sacrifice. Young people, go and take this word of life on the highways of the world which is heading towards the third millennium. The Cross of Christ is the world's hope.

In the liturgy of Palm Sunday, young people have a leading role, like the "children of Jerusalem", who "welcomed Christ the King. They carried olive branches and loudly praised the Lord: 'Hosanna in the highest' (Procession antiphon).

...They welcomed the Lord.

Young people of Rome and the world! Christ is calling you: welcome him!

**May 8, 1996**

LETTER OF JOHN PAUL II  
TO CARDINAL EDUARDO FRANCISCO PIRONIO  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE SEMINAR  
ON WORLD YOUTH DAYS  
ORGANIZED IN CZESTOCHOWA

Your Eminence

1. It was with great joy that I learnt that the Pontifical Council for the Laity had organized at the Shrine of Jasna Góra, Czestochowa, a Seminar on World Youth Days.

I am very pleased at this initiative and could not let it pass without offering a word of encouragement to the participants, and also expressing my grateful appreciation for all that has been done for the young people of the world.

Firstly, how can we not thank God for the numerous fruits produced by World Youth Days on many different levels? The first meeting held in St Peter's Square on Palm Sunday 1986, started a tradition of world and diocesan gatherings in alternate years, underlining, as it were, the twofold dimension, local and universal, of young people's indispensable apostolic commitment.

The Days in fact were born, also in response to an initiative of young people themselves, of a desire to offer them a significant "break" on the on-going pilgrimage of faith, which is indeed nurtured by meetings with young people of other nations and sharing respective experiences.

The principal objective of the Days is to make the person of Jesus the centre of the faith and life of every young person so that he may be their constant point of reference and also the inspiration of every initiative and commitment for the education of the new generations. This is the slogan of every Youth Day, and through this decade, the Days have been like an uninterrupted and pressing call to build life and faith upon the rock, who is Christ.

2. So young people are called periodically to make a pilgrimage along the roads of the world. In young people the Church sees herself and her mission to mankind: with them she faces the challenges of the future, aware that all humanity needs to be rejuvenated in spirit. This pilgrimage of the young members of the people builds bridges of brotherhood and hope between continents, peoples and cultures. It is a journey which is always in action, like life, like youth.

With the passing years, World Youth Days have proved themselves to be not conventional rites, but providential events, occasions for young people to profess and proclaim faith in Christ with ever greater joy. Coming together, they are able to discuss their most intimate aspirations, experience the Church as communion, make a commitment to the urgent task of new evangelization. And in doing so, they join hands, forming an immense circle of friendship, uniting in faith in the Risen Lord all the different races and nations, cultures and experiences.

3. World Youth Day is the Church's Day for youth and with youth. This idea is not an alternative to ordinary youth ministry, often carried out with great sacrifice and self-denial. Indeed it intends actually to consolidate this work by offering new encouragement for commitment, objectives which foster ever greater involvement and participation. By aiming to foster greater fervour in apostolate among young people, on no account the Church desires to isolate them from the rest of the community, but rather make them the protagonists of an apostolate which will spread to the other ages and situations of life in the ambit of "new evangelization".

The different moments of which a Youth Day is composed, form a sort of prolonged catechesis, a proclamation of the path of conversion to Christ, starting from the deepest experiences and questions of the daily life of the addressees. The Word of God is the central point, catechetical reflection is the method, prayer is the nutriment, and communication and dialogue, the style.

A Youth Day offers a young person a vivid experience of faith and communion, which will help to face the profound questions of life and to responsibly assume his or her place in society and in the ecclesial community.

4. During these unforgettable Youth Meetings, I have often been deeply touched by young peoples' joyous, spontaneous love for God and for the Church. They tell of suffering borne for the Gospel, of apparently irremovable obstacles overcome with God's help: they speak of their anguish before a world tormented by despair, cynicism and conflict. Each new Meeting, leaves me with an ever greater desire to praise God for revealing to young ones the secrets of his Kingdom (Mt 11,25).

The experience of Youth Days is an invitation to all of us, Bishops and pastoral workers, to constant reflection on our ministry among young people and the responsibility which we have to present to them the whole truth about Christ and his Church.

How can we not interpret their massive, willing and enthusiastic participation, as a constant demand to be accompanied on the pilgrimage of faith, on the journey which they undertake in response to God's grace working in their hearts?

They ask us to lead them to Christ, the only One who has words of eternal life (cf Jn 6,68). Listening to young people and teaching them, requires attention, time and wisdom. Youth ministry is one of the Church's priorities on the threshold of the third millennium.

With their enthusiasm and their exuberant energy, young people ask to be encouraged to become "leading characters in evangelization and participants in the renewal of society" (Cristifideles laici, 46). In this way young people, in whom the Church recognises her own youth as the Bride of Christ (cf Eph 5,22-33),

are not only evangelized, they also become evangelizers who carry the Gospel to their peers, even to those who do not know the Church and have not yet heard the Good News.

5. While I exhort all those responsible for youth ministry to make use of World Youth Days, with ever greater generosity and creativity, as events which, inserted in the normal process of education in the faith, may become the privileged manifestation of the whole Church's attention for the young generations and her confidence in them, I hope that the meeting in Czestochowa will help and stimulate the participants' reflection so that they may discover new and more efficacious ways of proposing the faith to young people.

Entrusting the work of the Seminar to the powerful intercession of Our Lady of Jasna Góra, Mother of young people, I gladly impart to you, Your Eminence, your collaborators, the participants and all whom they represent and carry in their hearts, my special Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, May 8th 1996

**August 15, 1996**

MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER  
TO THE YOUTH OF THE WORLD  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE XII  
WORLD YOUTH DAY

«Teacher, where are you staying? Come and see» (cf. Jn 1:38.39)

Dear Young People!

1. I come to you with joy to continue the dialogue, already long, whose fabric we are weaving together on the occasion of the World Youth Day. In communion with the whole people of God on the journey towards the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, I want to invite you this year to fix your eyes on Jesus, Teacher and Lord of life, with the help of the words recalled in John's Gospel: «Teacher, where are you staying? Come and see» (cf. 1:38-39).

In all the local Churches, during the coming months, you will be meeting together to reflect, with your Pastors, on these words of the Gospel. Then, in August 1997, together with many of you, we will have the experience of the XII World Youth Day, celebrated at international level in Paris, at the heart of the continent of Europe. In that metropolis, for centuries a crossroads for peoples, for art and culture, the young people of France are already preparing, enthusiastically, to welcome their young contemporaries from every corner of the planet. Following the Holy Year Cross, the people of the younger generations who believe in Christ will, once again, become a living icon of the Church in her pilgrimage along the roads of the world. Meeting in prayer and reflection, in the dialogue that unites beyond all difference of language and race, in the sharing of ideals, problems and hopes, these young people will experience living the reality promised by Jesus: «Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them» (Mt 18:20).

2. Youth of the whole world, it is along the paths of daily life that you can meet the Lord! Do you remember how the disciples, hurrying to the banks of the Jordan to listen to the last of the great prophets, John the Baptist, saw Jesus of Nazareth pointed out to them as the Messiah, the Lamb of God? Out of curiosity they decided to follow Him at a distance. They were shy almost and embarrassed, until, turning round, He asked them: «What do you seek?» So began the dialogue that would give rise to the adventure of John, Andrew, Simon «Peter» and the other apostles (cf. Jn 1:29-51).

In this concrete and surprising encounter, described in a few, essential words, we find the origin of every journey in faith. It is Jesus who takes the initiative. When we have to do with Him, the question is always turned upside down: from questioners, we become questioned; «searchers», we discover that we are «sought»; He, indeed, has always loved us first (cf. 1Jn 4:10). This is the fundamental dimension of the encounter: we are not dealing with something, but with Someone, with the «Living One». Christians are not the disciples of a system of philosophy: they are men and women who, in faith, have experienced the encounter with Christ (cf. 1Jn 1:1-4).

We are living in an era of great changes: the rapid decline of ideologies that seemed to promise a long resistance to the wear and tear of time; the tracing out on the planet of new confines and frontiers. Humanity often finds itself uncertain, bewildered and anxious (cf. Mt 9:36). But the word of God knows no decline; throughout history and among changing events, it remains firm and gives light (cf. Mt 24:35). The faith of the Church is founded on Jesus Christ, the one Saviour of the world, yesterday and today and for ever (cf. Heb 13:8). It gives Christ as reference for an answer to the questions rising up from the human heart in face of the mystery of life and death. Only from Christ, indeed, can there be answers that do not deceive nor disappoint.

When my thoughts go back to your words, spoken during the unforgettable encounters I have had the joy of experiencing with you on my apostolic journeys to every part of the world, I seem to read in them, with vital urgency, the very question of the disciples: «Teacher, where are you staying?» See that you are able to listen again, in the silence of prayer, to Jesus' answer: «Come and see».

3. Dear young people, like the first disciples, follow Jesus! Do not be afraid to draw near to Him, to cross the threshold of his dwelling, to speak with Him, face to face, as you talk with a friend (cf. Ex 33:11). Do not be afraid of the «new life» He is offering. He Himself makes it possible for you to receive that life and practise it, with the help of his grace and the gift of his Spirit.

It is true: Jesus is a demanding friend. He points to lofty goals; he asks us to go out of ourselves in order to meet Him, entrusting to Him our whole life : «Whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the Gospel will save it» (Mk 8:35). The proposal may seem difficult, and, in some cases, frightening. But – I ask you – is it better to be resigned to a life without ideals, to a world made in our image and likeness, or rather, generously to seek truth, goodness, justice, working for a world that reflects the beauty of God, even at the cost of facing the trials it may involve?

Break down the barriers of superficiality and fear! Recognizing that you are «new» men and women, regenerated by the grace of Baptism, talk with Jesus in prayer and while listening to the Word; experience the joy of reconciliation in the sacrament of Penance; receive the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist; welcome and serve Him in your brothers and sisters. You will discover the truth about yourselves and your inner unity, and you will find a «Thou» who gives the cure for anxieties, for nightmares and for the unbridled subjectivism that leaves you no peace.

4. «Come and see». You will meet Jesus where men and women are suffering and hoping: in the little villages, scattered across the continents and seemingly on the fringe of history, as Nazareth was when God sent his Angel to Mary; in the huge metropolises, where millions of human beings live often as strangers. In reality, every human being is a «fellow citizen» of Christ.

Jesus is living next to you, in the brothers and sisters with whom you share your daily existence. His visage is that of the poorest, of the marginalized who, not infrequently, are victims of an unjust model of development, in which profit is given first place and the human being is made a means rather than an end. Jesus' dwelling is wherever a human person is suffering because rights are denied, hopes betrayed, anxieties ignored. There, in the midst of humankind, is the dwelling of Christ, who asks you to dry every tear in his name, and to remind whoever feels lonely that no one whose hope is placed in Him is ever alone (cf. Mt 25:31-46).

5. Jesus dwells among those who call on Him without having known Him; among those who, after beginning to know Him, have lost Him through no fault of their own; among those who seek Him in sincerity of heart, while coming from different cultural and religious contexts (cf. Lumen Gentium, 16). As disciples and friends of Jesus, become agents of dialogue and collaboration with those who believe in a God who rules the universe with infinite love; be ambassadors of the Messiah you have found and known in his «dwelling», the Church, so that many more young people of your age may be able to follow in his footsteps; their way lighted by your fraternal charity and by the joy in your eyes that have contemplated Christ.

Jesus dwells among the men and women «honoured with the name of Christian» (cf. Lumen Gentium, 15 ). All are able to meet Him in the Scriptures, in prayer and in service of their neighbours. On the eve of the third millennium, it is becoming every day a more urgent duty to repair the scandal of the division among Christians, strengthening unity through dialogue, prayer in common and witness. It is not a matter of

ignoring differences and problems in the detachment of a lukewarm relativism; that would be like covering the wound without healing it, with the risk of interrupting the journey before reaching the goal of full communion. On the contrary, it is a matter of working – under the guidance of the Holy Spirit – with a view to effective reconciliation, trusting in the efficacy of Jesus' prayer on the eve of his passion : «Father, that they may be one even as we are one» (cf. Jn 17:22). The more you cling to Jesus the more capable you will become of being close to one another; and insofar as you make concrete gestures of reconciliation you will enter into the intimacy of his love.

Jesus dwells especially in your parishes, in the communities in which you live, in the associations and ecclesial movements to which you belong, as well as in many contemporary forms of grouping and apostolate at the service of the new evangelization. This rich variety of charisms is a benefit for the whole Church, and an encouragement for every believer to place his or her capacities at the service of the one Lord, fount of salvation for all humankind.

6. Jesus is «the Word of the Father» (cf. Jn 1:1), gift to humankind, to reveal the face of God, and to give a meaning and goal to their uncertain steps. God who «spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets in many and various ways, has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world» (Heb 1:1-2). His word is not an imposition, unhinging the doors of conscience; it is a persuasive voice, a free gift that, if it is to have a saving effect in each one's concrete existence, calls for an attitude of readiness and responsibility, a pure heart and a free mind.

In your groups, dear young people, multiply the occasions for hearing and studying the word of the Lord, especially through the *lectio divina*. You will discover the secrets of the Heart of God and will derive profit for discerning situations and transforming reality. Guided by Holy Scripture, you will be able to recognize the Lord's presence in your daily life; and even the «desert» can then become a «garden», where it is possible for the creature to talk familiarly with the Creator: «When I am reading divine Scripture, God walks again in the earthly Paradise» (St. Ambrose, Epistle 49,3).

7. Jesus lives among us in the Eucharist, the supreme fulfilment of his real presence, a presence that is contemporary with the history of humankind. Amidst the uncertainties and distractions of daily life, imitate the disciples on their way to Emmaus; like them, say to the Risen One, revealed in the act of breaking the bread: «Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent» (Lk 24:29). Call out to Jesus to remain with you always along the many roads to Emmaus of our time. May He be your strength, your point of reference, your enduring hope. May the Eucharistic Bread, dear young people, never be lacking on the tables of your existence. And may you draw from this Bread the strength to bear witness to the faith!

Around the Eucharistic table the harmonious unity of the Church is realized and made manifest; the mystery of missionary communion, in which all feel that they are children, sisters and brothers, without any exclusion or difference from race, language, age, social situation or culture. Dear young people, make your generous and responsible contribution to the constant building up of the Church as a family, a place of dialogue and mutual acceptance, a space of peace, mercy and pardon.

8. Enlightened by the Word and strengthened by the Bread of the Eucharist, dear young people, you are called to be credible witnesses to the Gospel of Christ, who makes all things new.

But how are you to be recognized as true disciples of Christ? By the fact that you have «love for one another» (Jn 13:35) after the example of his love: a love that is freely given, infinitely patient and denied to no one (cf. 1Cor 13:4-7). Fidelity to the new commandment will be the guarantee that you are consistent with respect to what you are proclaiming. This is the great «novelty» which can amaze a world that, unfortunately, is still torn and divided by violent conflicts that at times are clearly evident, at times subtle and hidden. In this world you are called to live fraternally, not as a utopia but as a real possibility; in this society you are called, as true missionaries of Christ, to build the civilization of love.

9. On 30 September 1997 will occur the centenary of the death of St. Thérèse of Lisieux. Hers is a figure that, in her own country, cannot fail to draw the attention of a great many young pilgrims; Thérèse, precisely, is a young Saint, and her message today is simple and suggestive, brimming over with amazement and gratitude: God is Love; every person is loved by God, who expects to be welcomed and loved by each one.

This is a message, young people of today, that you are called to receive and to shout aloud to those of your own age : «Man is loved by God! This very simple yet profound proclamation is owed to humanity by the Church» (cf. Christifideles Laici, 34 ).

From the youth of Theresa of the Child Jesus spring forth her enthusiasm for the Lord, the intensity of her love, the realistic daring of her great projects. The charm of her holiness is confirmation that God grants in abundance, even to the young, the treasures of his wisdom.

Walk with her the humble and simple way of Christian maturity, at the school of the Gospel. Stay with her in the «heart» of the Church, living radically the option for Christ.

10. Dear young people, in the house where Jesus dwells meet the most sweet presence of the Mother. It is in Mary's womb that the Word was made flesh. Accepting the role assigned to her in the plan of salvation, the Virgin became a model for every disciple of Christ.

I entrust to Her the preparation and the celebration of the XII World Youth Day, together with the hopes and expectations of the young people who, with Her, are repeating in every corner of the planet: «Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word» (cf. Lk 1:38); and who are going to meet Jesus, to stay with Him, ready then to proclaim to their contemporaries, as did the Apostles: «We have found the Messiah!» (Jn 1:41).

With this message I cordially greet each one of you and, accompanying you with my prayer, I bless you.

From Castel Gandolfo, 15 August 1996, Solemnity of the Assumption into Heaven of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

### **September 19, 1996**

**MARTYRS IN THE VENDEE COURAGEOUSLY REMAINED FAITHFUL TO CHRIST'S CHURCH**  
Pope John Paul II

In France to Young People September 19, 1996

Dear Friends from Saint-Laurent-sur-Sevre and the Diocese of Luçon, Dear Young People,

1. Thank you for coming to welcome me on my way in pilgrimage to the tomb of St Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort. I am happy to greet you who were born in this land of the Vendée, you who cherish the precious memory of the pages of your history, both tragic and beautiful.

You are the heirs of men and women who were courageous enough to remain faithful to the Church of Jesus Christ at a time when its freedom and independence were threatened. They were not detached from the movements of the time and they sincerely desired the necessary renewal of society, but they could not accept the imposition of a break with the universal Church and, in particular, with the Successor of Peter. And so the parish priest of Maille Joseph Herbert, inspired by the words of Christ, said nobly: "As a citizen of the State I have always given to Caesar what belonged to Caesar; but I will not refuse God what belongs to God".

People of the Vendée had great love of the Eucharist

In the terrible struggles, many deeds on both sides were stained by sin. But it was in holy union with Christ that numerous martyrs offered their life here, uniting with the Son of God in the sacrifice of the Cross. To the very end they followed their true Master, the One who came to reveal the truth which sets us free and the depth of God's love for all men.

In the numerous acts of witness which have come down to us, it is moving to see that the people of the Vendée remained attached to their parishes and their priests despite the cruelty of the persecution. They had a real hunger for the Eucharist, at the risk of their lives, they desired to take part in Mass and to



receive the Bread of Life. They wanted to receive the sacrament of forgiveness aware that we are always in need of divine mercy.

Some of them, religious or lay, showed a touching Christian spirit when they tended the wounded regardless of which side they were on, or, when inspired by their leaders such as d'Elbee who convinced them to take seriously the words of forgiveness in the Our Father, they decided to spare their enemies.

Dear friends, in recalling just a few events of your history, I would like to invite you to remember the best ones. Continue to follow Christ, like him, love all humanity, starting with the most underprivileged. Remain faithful to the Church, to the Eucharist and to the sacrament of forgiveness. Let yourselves be imbued with the love which comes from God! Far from cultivating a fruitless nostalgia, you will then be worthy of your ancestors and continue to live generously as living stones of the Church to which they remained attached to the point of shedding their blood for her.

2. And now I address the young people gathered here, students of the Catholic and State schools. My friends, what I have just said concerns you just as much as your elders. I know that you sometimes have real difficulty in affirming your faith and your membership in the Church.

May the martyrs guide you on your way

So, I say to you: be brave! Do not let yourselves be overcome by the indifference so widespread around you! Do not let yourselves be impressed by those who reject the demands of our Christian faith or who scorn it.

It is now up to you to make your way! Your formation is a real training. Remember St Paul: he spoke of the athletes who trained for the race, at the cost of severe discipline, for a perishable prize, but the Christian knows where his efforts are leading him: to make his life succeed as a disciple of Jesus (cf. I Cor 9:24-

27). If you enroll in the school of Christ, you will develop whatever is best in you; you will learn how to give as well as to receive.

You are not alone; you are part of a large community. In the Church the Pope, the Bishops united to him, the priests, the religious and the lay teachers in conjunction with your families are there to hasten to you, guide you and point you in the right direction. They have no other ambition than to pass on to you the Good News of Christ. Do not hesitate to call on them to help you grow in the faith!

Like the disciples beside the river Jordan, you ask the Lord: "Master, where do you live?" He replies: "Come and see" (Jn 1:38-39). You know that these words are the theme for World Youth Day, next year in Paris. It will be an opportunity for many of you to share your Christian experience with young people from other countries in the world. Be ready to give them a friendly welcome.

Dear friends, trust in Christ, hunger with him in prayer, be active members in the community of his disciples. Take your place in the Church without delay. With your brothers and sisters of all generations, work so that "steadfast, love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other," as one of the psalms says (Ps 85 [84].11).

I pray that the martyrs of times past will guide you on your way, so that they will keep you free from all influence and power, and communicate to you their joy in believing and their courage in serving, after the example of Christ.

3. For you, my young friends, and for you all dear faithful of the Vendee, I fervently invoke the intercession of St Louis-Marie, missionary, and that of all the blessed martyrs of your land. May Our Lady protect you!

With all my heart I grant you my Apostolic Blessing.

I would like to thank you for reducing the rain. The earth needs rain but sometimes one would really like the rain to be somewhat lighter. Indeed this has happened here, thanks to you!

**December 21, 1996**

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## SPREAD FORGIVENESS AND YOU WILL BECOME PEACEMAKERS

Pope John Paul II

On Saturday, 21 December 1996, the Holy Father addressed a representative group of young members of Catholic Action and exchanged Christmas greetings with them. He urged them to live and spread forgiveness and thus become peacemakers in their own surroundings. Here is a translation of his words, which he spoke in Italian.

I kindly thank you, dear boys and girls of Catholic Action, who have come from various parts of Italy for this appointment—by now customary—that enables us to exchange greetings for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

I welcome you with joy: from the children, to the boys and girls, to the adolescents. I greet you with affection, together with your leaders and your teachers, beginning with the National President and the General Chaplain. Thank you for the expressions of affection you addressed to me.

In last year's Christmas meeting the message I gave the boys and girls of Catholic Action was "Let us give children a future of peace". I am certain that you received it with great seriousness. I know that I can count on the young people of Catholic Action.

This year, thinking of the next World Day of Peace, I entrust you with the task of living and spreading forgiveness, thus becoming peacemakers. Looking at the crib, where the little Child lies in the straw of the manger, we can easily understand what forgiveness is: it is reaching out to the other who offended me, coming close to him who drew away from me. God was faithful to sinful humanity to the point of dwelling among us.

The beautiful Christmas carol *Tuscendi dalle stelle* says: "Oh, how much it cost you to have loved me!". The Son of God loved us, who offended him; we too must love those who offend us, and thus conquer evil with good. To hate sin but to love the sinner: this is the way to peace, the way that the Lord teaches us from the mystery of his birth.

When I look at you, boys and girls, I see as it were Jesus' peers. To these young contemporaries of Jesus I wish to offer a Blessing and a cordial wish for a Merry Christmas!

# 1997

June 13, 1997

PASTORAL VISIT TO POLAND

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER

at Youth Meeting

(Poznan — 3 June 1997)

Dear Young Friends!

1. "This is the day which the Lord has given us. Let us rejoice and be glad in it!"

Everywhere on my pilgrimage this year in my homeland I am met with expressions of great warmth and joy. That is how it was at Wroclaw, at Legnica, at Gorzów, at Gniezno, and that is how it is here too, at Poznan.

I thank you with all my heart for this meeting and for coming in such great numbers, even though this is time of exams and final marks. I greet each of you, one by one, and through you I wish to greet all the young people of Poland, and also your parents, teachers, chaplains and professors, and the whole university world. I extend words of cordial greeting to the Archbishop of the Church in Poznan, to his Auxiliary

Bishops and to the People of God of this beloved Archdiocese. I greet also Archbishop Jerzy Stroba, who for many long years exercised his pastoral ministry in this Archdiocese. I thank him for all that he has done for the universal Church and especially for the Church in Poland.

"This is the day which the Lord has given us . . ."

2. The passage from Matthew's Gospel which we have just read takes us to the Lake of Gennesaret. The Apostles had got into the boat to go before Jesus to the other side. And it came to pass that as they rowed in the chosen direction they saw Jesus walking on the lake. Christ was walking on the water as though it were solid ground. The Apostles were afraid, thinking it was a ghost. Jesus, hearing their cry, spoke: "Take heart, it is I; have no fear" (Mt 14:27). And then Peter said: "Lord if it is you, bid me come to you on the water". And Jesus answered, "Come!" (Mt 14:28-29). So Peter stepped out of the boat and began to walk on the water. He was just about to come to Christ when there was a strong gust of wind and he became afraid. As he began to sink he called out: "Lord, save me!" (Mt 14:30). The Jesus reached out his hand, caught him and kept him from sinking and said: "O man of little faith, why did you doubt?" (Mt 14:31).

This Gospel event is full of profound meaning. It concerns the most important problem of human life, faith in Jesus Christ. Peter certainly had faith, as he later magnificently showed in the region near Caesarea Philippi, but at that moment his faith was not yet solid. When the wind began to blow more strongly Peter began to sink, because he had doubted. It was not the wind that made Peter sink into the lake but the insufficiency of his faith. Peter's faith had lacked one essential element — complete abandonment to Christ, total trust in him at the moment of great trial; he lacked unreserved hope in him. Faith and hope, together with love, constitute the foundation of the Christian life, the cornerstone of which is Jesus Christ.

In Jesus' death on the Cross and in his Resurrection from the tomb God's love for man and for the world was fully revealed. Jesus is the only way to the Father, the only way that leads to truth and life (cf. Jn 14:6). This message which the Church ever since the beginning has proclaimed to all men and all nations was proclaimed anew to our generation by the Second Vatican Council. Allow me to quote a brief passage from the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*: "The Church believes that Christ, who died and was raised up for all, can through his Spirit offer man the light and the strength to measure up to his supreme destiny. Nor has any other name under heaven been given to man by which it is fitting for him to be saved. She likewise holds that in her most benign Lord and Master can be found the key, the focal point, and the goal of all human history. The Church also maintains that beneath all changes there are many realities which do not change and which have their ultimate foundation in Christ, who is the same yesterday and today, yes and for ever" (No. 10).

Dear young people, follow Christ with the enthusiasm of your youthful hearts. He alone can calm man's fear. Look to Jesus from the depths of your hearts and minds! He is your inseparable friend.

This message about Christ, to which I devoted my first Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*, I announce to the young people of every continent during my pastoral visits and on the occasion of the World Youth Days. It is also the theme of the August meeting that the youth will have with the Pope in Paris: I cordially invite you to this meeting. As Christians you are called to bear witness to faith and hope, so that people — as Saint Paul writes — "will not be without hope and without God in this world" but will "learn to know Christ" (cf. Eph 2:12; 4:20).

Faith in Christ and the hope which he teaches enables man to conquer himself, to conquer everything in him that is weak and sinful; and at the same time this faith and hope lead him to victory over evil and the effects of sin in the world around him. Christ freed Peter from the fear which had seized him on the stormy lake. Christ enables us too to overcome the difficult moments in life, if with faith and hope we turn to him and ask his help. "Take heart, it is I; have no fear" (Mt 14:27). Strong faith, from which is born limitless hope, a virtue so needed today, frees man from fear and gives him the spiritual strength to resist all life's storms. Do not be afraid of Christ! Trust him completely! He alone "has words of eternal life". Christ never lets us down!

Here in this place, in Adam Mickiewicz Square, there once stood a monument to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, the visible sign of the victory won by the Polish people thanks to their faith and hope in Christ. The monument was erected in 1932 with contributions from the whole of society as a testimony of gratitude for

freedom regained. A Poland reborn gathered round the Heart of Jesus, to draw from this Fount of generous love the strength to build the country's future on the foundation of God's truth, in unity and harmony. After the outbreak of the Second World War that monument became such a dangerous symbol of the Christian and Polish spirit that it was destroyed by the invaders at the beginning of the Occupation.

3. Dear young people! How many times have the faith and hope of the Polish people been put to the test, a very difficult test, in this century which is about to end! We only need recall the First World War and, connected with it, the determination of all those who undertook the decisive struggle to regain independence. We only need recall the period of twenty years between the two wars, when everything had to be rebuilt. Then there came the Second World War and the terrible Occupation following the pact between Hitler's Germany and Soviet Russia, which decided upon the removal of Poland, as a State, from the map of Europe. What a radical challenge that period was for all Poles! Truly, the Second World War generation was in a certain sense immolated on the great altar of the struggle to maintain and ensure the freedom of the homeland. How many human lives it cost, young and promising lives! What a high price the Poles paid, first on the fronts in September 1939 and then on all the fronts where the Allies were fighting against the invaders.

At the end of the War there came a long period, of almost fifty years, of a new danger, this time not warlike but peaceful. The victory of the Red Army brought Poland not only freedom from Hitler's occupation but also a new oppression. If during the Occupation men died at the front, in the concentration camps, in clandestine political and military resistance, the last cry of which was the Warsaw Uprising, the first years of the new regime were a constant series of mistreatment of numberless Poles. The new power-holders did everything to subjugate the Nation, to make it submit to them politically and ideologically.

The following years, beginning with October 1956, were not as bloody; but that battle against the Nation and against the Church lasted until the 1980. It was the consequence of the challenge to the faith and hope of the Poles, who continued to spare no effort to avoid surrendering, to defend those religious and national values exposed to a particular danger.

My dear friends, this had to be said here, in this place. It was necessary to say it once again to you, the young people who will take on responsibility for the future of Poland in the Third Millennium. Awareness of our past helps us to take our place in the long line of generations, so that we can pass on to generations to come the common good, our homeland.

It would be difficult not to mention here still another monument, the Monument to the Victims of June 1956. It was erected in this Square by the people of Poznan and Wielkopolska on the 25th anniversary of the tragic events in which the great popular protest against the inhuman system of the oppression of human hearts and minds was expressed. I wanted to come to this Monument in 1983 when I made my first visit to your city as Pope, but on that occasion I was denied permission to pray beneath the Crosses of Poznan. I am pleased that today, together with you — the young Poland — I am able to kneel before this Monument and pay homage to the workers who gave their lives in defence of truth, justice and the independence of our homeland.

4. We look once more to the Lake of Gennesaret on which Peter's boat is sailing. The lake evokes the image of the world, also the modern world in which we are living and in which the Church is carrying out her mission. This world is a challenge for man, just as the lake was a challenge for Peter. For him it was so close and familiar, as the place of his daily work as a fisherman, and on the other hand it was the element of nature which he had to face with his own strength and experience.

Man has to enter this world, in a certain sense immerse himself in it, for he has received from God the command to "subdue the earth" by work, study, creative effort (cf. Gen 1:28). On the other hand, man cannot shut himself up exclusively within the limits of the material world, neglecting the Creator. For this is against man's nature, against his inner truth, since the human heart, as Saint Augustine says, is restless until it rests in God (cf. Confessions, I,1,1). The human person, created in the image and likeness of God, cannot become a slave to things, to economic systems, to technological civilization, to consumerism, to easy success. Man cannot become the slave of his inclinations and passions, sometimes deliberately aroused. We must defend ourselves against this danger. We need to know how to use our freedom, choosing what is the true good. Do not let people make you slaves! Do not let people tempt you with false values, half-truths,

the fascination of illusions, which you will later leave behind with disappointment, hurt and perhaps with your life ruined.

In the address which I once gave to UNESCO, I said that the first and essential task of culture is to educate man. And that education "consists in fact in enabling man to become more man, to 'be' more and not just to 'have' more and consequently, through everything he 'has', everything he 'possesses', to 'be' man more fully. For this purpose man must be able to 'be more' not only 'with others', but also 'for others'" (Address to UNESCO, Paris, 2 June 1980, No.11; in *L'Osservatore Romano*, English-language edition, 23 June 1980, p. 10).

This truth has a fundamental significance for self-education, self-realization, for developing in oneself the humanity and the divine life given in Baptism and strengthened in the Sacrament of Confirmation. Self-education aims precisely at "being" more human and more Christian, at discovering and developing in oneself the talents received from the Creator and realizing the vocation to holiness.

Sometimes the world can be something threatening, it is true; but someone who lives by faith and hope has in himself the power of the Spirit to face the dangers of this world. Peter walked on the waves of the lake, even though it was against the laws of gravity, because he was looking Jesus in the eye. When he doubted, when he lost personal contact with the Master, he began to sink and was rebuked: "O man of little faith, why did you doubt?" (Mt 14:31).

From the example of Peter we learn how important in the spiritual life is the personal bond with Christ: it has to be constantly renewed and deepened. How? Above all by prayer. My dear friends, pray and learn to pray, read and meditate on the Word of God, strengthen the bond with Christ in the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, study the problems of the interior life and of the apostolate in youth groups, Church movements and organizations, which are numerous in our country.

5. Dear young friends! We are celebrating the Jubilee of the millennium of the martyrdom of Saint Adalbert. Today at Gniezno, at the Solemn Eucharist, I said that Saint Adalbert bore witness to Christ, suffering martyrdom for the faith. This martyrdom of the great Apostle of the Slavs challenges you: today too it calls for the witness of the life of each one of you. It calls for new men and women who will make manifest in the midst of this world the "power and the wisdom" (cf. 1 Cor 1:22-25) of the Gospel of God in their own lives. This world, which sometimes seems like an untameable element, like a stormy sea, at the same time has a profound thirst for Christ, such a thirst for the Good News. It has such need of love.

Be in this world bearers of Christian faith and hope by living love every day. Be faithful witnesses of the Risen Christ, never turn back before the obstacles that present themselves on the paths of your lives. I am counting on you. On your youthful energy and your dedication to Christ. I have known Polish youth. They have never disappointed me. The world needs you. The Church needs you. The future of Poland depends on you. Build and strengthen on Polish soil the "civilization of love": in personal, social and political life, in the schools, universities, parishes and families that one day you will form. For this purpose spare none of your youthful enthusiasm, energy and sacrifice. "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope" (Rom 15:13).

I entrust to the protection of Mary, the Faithful Virgin, the Mother of Fairest Love, the Queen of Poland, each of you and all the youth of our homeland.

**August 21, 1997**

Welcoming ceremony

Christ is our hope and joy Holy Father asks young people to open their hearts and minds to the Lord

On Thursday afternoon, 21 August, the Holy Father went to the Champ-de-Mars, originally a military parade ground and now a park, to greet the young people who had gathered in Paris for the 12th World Youth Day. Facing the Eiffel Tower, the Holy Father was first welcomed by Archbishop Louis-Marie Billé of Aix-en-Provence, President of the Bishops' Conference of France, and by two young people before extending his own greetings to those assembled. Here is a translation of his opening address, which was given in French.

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Young People from throughout the world,

The Bishop of Rome greets you and he expresses his confidence in you and his joy at meeting you. You come from many different countries and from all continents. You represent not only young people from France and Europe, but also from North, Central and South America, the archipelagos and the islands of the Atlantic Ocean, young people from many African countries, the Islands of the Indian Ocean, young people from Asia, Australia, the Far East and all the seas encircling the continent of Asia, young people from the Pacific. This is truly a "World" Youth Day. You are the hope of the world, you who aspire to an ever more beautiful life, based on the moral and spiritual values which make us free and guide our steps towards eternity.

You are continuing the history of the World Youth Day. It is worth recalling that history. The first World Youth Day was held in Rome in 1984. The next took place in Buenos Aires (1987). We then gathered in Santiago de Compostela, Spain (1989) and, in 1991, in Czestochowa, Poland. That Day was truly unique, since it was the first time that young people from the former Soviet Union were able to take part: young people from Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, representatives from Kazakhstan and other republics of Central Asia, and Christians from the Caucasus. The international dimension of the Youth Day then took on new breadth. In 1993 we met in Denver, in the United States. Then, in 1995, in Manila in the Philippines; this was the largest meeting ever, thanks to the nearness of great metropolitan centres. We are now gathered in Paris. The level of hospitality at this meeting must be maintained. I offer heartfelt thanks to Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger, to Bishop Michel Dubost and to the organizers of this meeting, especially the young people of the different Dioceses of France who have been preparing for the arrival of their companions. I thank Archbishop Louis-Marie Billé, President of the Bishops' Conference of France, for his words of welcome and the French Bishops for offering the hospitality of their Dioceses to guests from around the world.

I extend respectful greetings to the distinguished representatives of the Christian Churches and Ecclesial Communities, as well as to those of the Jewish and Muslim communities: I thank them heartily for having wished to join this festive assembly of Catholic youth.

I also thank the young Filipino and French delegates who now invite you to form the great chain of faith, solidarity, friendship and peace between the countries of the whole world.

You are following in the footsteps of the young people who, carrying olive branches, came forth to meet Christ as he entered Jerusalem. Today, young people from every continent, you acknowledge Christ who unites us in joyful fellowship and in firm solidarity, and you march together towards the happiness which he offers us. You have chosen the rainbow as the sign of your diverse origins and cultures; in this way you express your thanksgiving for God's covenants with creation up to the definitive covenant sealed by the blood of the Saviour.

A roll call of the nations represented at World Youth Day was then read. Afterwards the Holy Father continued in French.

After welcoming the representatives of the different countries, I now cordially greet the delegations of the international movements, associations and communities.

The Pope then greeted those present in their various languages. To the English-speaking young people he said:

A special greeting to the English-speaking young people from all over the world. The Pope is delighted to meet so many of you here in Paris, at the World Youth Day.

Christ has brought us together. He is the subject of our reflections during these days; he is at the centre of our prayer. He is the source of the spiritual bond which unites us in his Church, a bond which, perhaps, we feel more intensely as we look around and see so many young people whose hearts are beating with the message of the Gospel of hope, the Gospel of life.

""Teacher, where are you staying?'. He said to them, "Come and see' ... and they stayed with him" (Jn 1:38-39). This is the challenge which the World Youth Day offers to the young people of Europe, Africa,

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Asia, Oceania and the Americas. May this great event help you to know Jesus better and love him more. Then you will be his apostles to the world at the dawn of the approaching millennium. God bless you all!

After offering greetings in Spanish, Italian, German, Portuguese, Polish, Russian, Romanian, Hungarian, Arabic, Tagalog, Swahili and Chinese, the Holy Father again spoke in French.

Dear young people, Christ is our hope; Christ is our joy. In the days to come, open your hearts and minds to Christ. You are part of the Church, which wishes to open up to you the way of salvation and the path to happiness. I invite you to let yourselves be guided by the Lord and to make this journey together with him. In the course of this week, may each day be filled with grace and peace.

A handicapped youth then read the passage of St John's Gospel recounting the washing of the feet (Jn 13:1-15). Afterwards Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger, Archbishop of Paris, greeted the Holy Father and thanked him for offering the young people a meditation on this Gospel passage, assuring him that in all their prayer vigils they would reflect on the words he entrusted to them. [A translation of the Pope's meditation begins at the bottom of this page.] The Holy Father then led the young people in the Lord's Prayer and imparted his Blessing. Before taking his leave the Pope said in French:

We now know why the engineer Eiffel built this tower to have a great youth gathering here around the tower: the World Youth Day which we have just opened and which will continue tomorrow and the day after tomorrow, until Sunday. Now goodbye; see you later. One suggestion for this evening: sleep well!

### **August 21, 1997**

Message on prayer for vocations

Pray that young people will hear the call of the Lord and not be afraid to answer it

On Thursday evening, 21 August, the young people gathered in front of Notre-Dame Cathedral to participate in a Prayer Vigil for vocations. For the occasion the Holy Father sent a Message addressed to Archbishop Louis-Marie Billé, President of the French Bishops' Conference. Here is a translation.

To Archbishop Louis-Marie Billé of Aix, Arles and Embrun President of the French Bishops' Conference for the Young People gathered at Notre-Dame de Paris on Thursday, 21 August 1997, to reflect and pray for vocations

Dear Young People,

1. The heart of the Bishop of Rome turns to you who feel a call to follow Christ in the ministerial priesthood or in the consecrated life. You come before the Lord to ask him to send missionaries of the Gospel, to tell him of your desire to serve him, to revive the gift of God within you (cf. 2 Tm 1:6), and to show him your interior readiness: "Lord, what do you want from me?". You are gathered before Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris. Every cathedral is a place that bears a special meaning. It is the centre of the diocesan Church, the seat of the Bishop, entrusted with bringing together in unity all the local communities. In fact, it is around the Bishops, the Successors of the Apostles, that the Church is built, with Christ as the cornerstone.

With the Apostle, I exhort you: "therefore, brethren, be the more zealous to confirm your call and election" (2 Pt 1:10). Listen to the Spirit; "it is he who makes the word alive and present, helping to grasp its worth and its demands" (Message for World Vocations Day 1997, n. 2). May your first response before the Lord be to give thanks to him for your families and for the Christian communities which have helped you and sustained you by their presence and prayer in your human growth and in the maturation of your vocation.

The necessary premise of apostolic ministry and the consecrated life is your spiritual formation, by which your personality and your lives are unified. You will discover the importance of prayer for the Church and the world. I invite you to spend time in the company of the Lord to learn "to live in intimate and unceasing union with God the Father, through his Son Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit" (Optatam totius, n. 8). Seek Christ by meditating faithfully on the word of God, in active participation in the mysteries of the Church, and in the first place in the Eucharist and the Divine Office (cf. *ibid.*). Through perfect chastity you wish

to draw attention to the fact that God is to be preferred above all else without in the least disregarding the value of other human relationships, and that the person finds happiness in consecrating himself or herself to the Lord.

To seminarians

2. Dear seminarians,

During this evening you will meditate on the actions of Christ, servant of all, who, on Holy Thursday, instituted the Eucharist and the priesthood; his real presence is actualized in his Body and Blood, and his mercy is manifested in his forgiveness. You have heard God's call and you wish to follow him. It is a beautiful thing to desire to enter the ministerial priesthood, but it is right that God's call be confirmed by the Church, because it belongs to her to discern the quality of your vocation. Indeed Christ calls us through his Church, telling us in this way that we are only the recipients of his divine treasure and that the mission is a mandate from the Lord. This evening, you truly want to lay your lives before Christ and show him your desire to serve as he wishes. Readiness and forgetting one's self are the fundamental attitudes for all those who wish to do the will of the Lord.

3. For your Bishops you are the "apple of their eye" (Gift and Mystery, 10); the seminary is "a continuation in the Church of the apostolic community gathered about Jesus, listening to his word, proceeding toward the Easter experience, awaiting the gift of the Spirit for the mission" (Pastores dabō vobis, n. 60). You are the joy of Bishops who judge the diocesan Church by the seminary and make themselves present through your educators. You are a gift for the Church that permits her to look with confidence to the future. The whole people of God rejoices when young men are willing to prepare themselves for the priesthood, which is indispensable for the Church's growth and sanctification.

4. During your years in the seminary, you are gathered by the Holy Spirit in a unique fraternity. This time of community life is a true experience of the Church which prepares you for life as part of the presbyterate, with all the diversity of charisms and sensibilities which that entails. Thus every day you will feel yourselves more and more as members of the diocesan Church. You must acquire an intellectual formation which will contribute to your knowledge of the mystery of Christ and will prepare you to announce the Gospel with a great love of the truth (cf. *Optatam totius*, nn. 14-15). With the support of the seminary community, you will attain genuine human maturity. Give yourselves to living the theological virtues and developing self-mastery and forming your character in order to be models of Christian life, practicing from now on what you will have to teach (cf. *Ritual of the Ordination of Priests*, n. 102; *Lumen gentium*, n. 28). By the free and maturely considered choice of celibacy you will be able to manifest your total gift of self for the Lord and for the mission. Ordination identifies you sacramentally with Christ and confers a character which embraces your whole being.

5. Priests are not to "lord it over others and enjoy honours, but to devote themselves completely to the service of God and the pastoral ministry" (*Optatam totius*, n. 9). This presupposes that you are imbued with the mystery of the Church and have a profound love for all people. "Each one possesses the Holy Spirit in the measure in which he loves the Church" (St Augustine, *Treatise on the Gospel of John*, 32, 8). You can only proclaim the Gospel to your fellow human beings if you are close to them and know human society from within, with its evolutions and its needs. At the same time, learn to work with the laity, whose human and spiritual influence will greatly enrich you (cf. *Christifideles laici*, nn. 61- 63; *Apostolic Letter Mulieris dignitatem*, nn. 29-31). For we are all engaged in the same mission.

6. I invite you to live in a trustful relationship of obedience and communion with the Bishop of your Diocese: he is "the first representative of Christ in priestly formation" (*Pastores dabō vobis*, n. 65); it is he who has the task, in collaboration with those responsible for vocations, of determining the place and the manner of your training. Leaving behind one's self to serve the Church and to follow Christ is accomplished by entrusting one's life and future into the hands of the Bishop, as symbolically takes place during ordination, in order to act in the perspective of pastoral charity. It is through obedience that we come to do the will of God. Such an attitude reinforces the sense of service and readiness for the ecclesial mission, and one's openness to the pastoral life of the Diocese. You will thus be linked to the Bishop "in loyal co-operation, in harmony with your fellow-priests" (cf. *Optatam totius*, n. 9).

To aspirants to the consecrated life

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7. Dear young people who are thinking about religious life or a commitment in an institute of consecrated life:

The Church greatly esteems the consecrated life, of which Christ is the model (cf. *Perfectae caritatis*, n. 25). It is a great grace to have been chosen by the Lord. Through the practice of the evangelical counsels, through your life of prayer and the exercise of charity, you unveil to others the face of God and you actively participate in the advancement of God's people. You intend to give yourselves to the Lord with an undivided heart (cf. 1 Col 7:34), like the Apostles who left everything to stay with Christ and, like him, to be at the service of God and of the brethren. In this way you will help to manifest the mystery and the mission of the Church by the multiple charisms of spiritual and apostolic life given by the Holy Spirit, and you will make your own contribution to the renewal of society (cf. *Vita consecrata*, n. 1).

8. I invite you all to pray for those young people who, throughout the world, hear the call of the Lord and for those who may be afraid to answer that call. May they find educators at hand to guide them! May they perceive the grandeur of their vocation: to love Christ above all else as a call to freedom and happiness! Pray so that the Church may help you in your search and in arriving at a correct discernment! Pray so that Christian communities may always know how to pass on the call of the Lord to the younger generations! With me, thank the Lord "for the gift of a vocation, for the grace of priesthood, for priestly vocations throughout the world" (*Gift and Mystery*, 10)! Let us thank him for consecrated persons! Let us thank him for families, parishes and movements, the cradles of vocations! Reaffirm your filial trust in the Mother of God, for ordained ministers and the entire Church have much to learn from Mary (cf. *Redemptoris Mater*, n. 43). Be true witnesses of faith and charity, ready to give your lives for the glory of God and for the salvation of the world. May God continue in you what he has already begun!

Paris, 21 August 1997.

IOANNES PAULUS PP. II

**August 22, 1997**

Beatification of Frédéric Ozanam

He who loves abides in God

Love of those in extreme need was the centre of Bl. Frédéric's life

On Friday morning, 22 August, the Holy Father went to Notre-Dame Cathedral to celebrate a solemn Mass for the beatification of the Servant of God Frédéric Ozanam (1813-53), a married man and father who taught literature at the Sorbonne and founded the St Vincent de Paul Society for the relief of the poor. Concelebrating with the Pope were the Bishops who had come from France and abroad to participate in the 12th World Youth Day. After the reading of the Gospel (Lk 10:27-37), the Holy Father preached the following homily in French. Here is a translation.

1. "Love is of God" (1 Jn 4:7). Today's Gospel presents us with the figure of the Good Samaritan. In this parable, Christ wants to show his listeners who is the neighbour mentioned in the great commandment of the divine law: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself" (Lk 10:27). A doctor of the law was asking what he should do to have eternal life: he found in these words the decisive answer. He knew that love of God and neighbour is the first and greatest of the commandments. Despite this, he asks: "And who is my neighbour?" (Lk 10:29).

He who loves is born of God

The fact that Jesus proposes a Samaritan as an example to answer this question is significant. In effect, the Samaritans were not particularly esteemed by the Jews. Moreover, Christ compares the conduct of this man to that of a priest and a Levite who see the man wounded by brigands, lying half dead on the road, and pass by without giving him any help. On the contrary, the Samaritan, who sees the suffering man, "had compassion" (Lk 10:33). His compassion brings him to perform a whole series of actions. First he bandaged his wounds, then he took the wounded man to an inn to care for him and, before leaving, he gave the inn keeper the necessary money to take care of him (cf. Lk 10:34-35). This example is eloquent. The doctor of the

law received a clear answer to his question: Who is my neighbour? The neighbour is every human being without exception. It is not necessary to ask his nationality, or to which social or religious group he belongs. If he is in need, he must be helped. This is what is required by the first and greatest divine law, the law of love of God and neighbour.

Faithful to this commandment of the Lord, Frédéric Ozanam believed in love, the love of God for every individual. He felt himself called to love, giving the example of a great love for God and others. He went to all those who needed to be loved more than others, those to whom the love of God could not be revealed effectively except through the love of another person. There Ozanam discovered his vocation, the path to which Christ called him. He found his road to sanctity. And he followed it with determination.

2. "Love is of God". Love of man has its origin in the law of God: our first reading from the Old Testament shows this. We find there a detailed description of the actions involved in loving our neighbour. It is like a biblical preparation for the parable of the Good Samaritan.

The second reading, taken from the First Letter of St John, explains the meaning of the words "Love is of God". The Apostle writes to his disciples: "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God; for God is love" (1 Jn 4:7-8). This saying of the Apostle is really at the centre of the New Covenant, the apex towards which all that is written in the Gospels and the apostolic Letters leads us. St John continues: "In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins" (ibid., 10). The remission of sins is a sign of the love which the Son of God made man has brought us. Then, love of neighbour, love of every human being, is not only a commandment. It is a demand which is consequent on the living experience of God's love. That is why John can write: "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (1 Jn 4:11).

The teaching of the Letter of John continues as the Apostle writes: "No man has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his own Spirit" (1 Jn 4:12-13). Love, then, is the source of knowledge. If, on the one hand, knowledge is a condition of love, on the other, love makes our knowledge grow. If we remain in love, we intimately experience the action of the Holy Spirit who enables us to participate in the redeeming love of the Son whom the Father has sent to save the world. By knowing Christ as the Son of God, we remain in him and, through him, we remain in God. Through the merits of Christ we believe in love, we know the love that God has for us, we know that God is love (cf. 1 Jn 4:16). This knowledge through love is in some way the keystone of the whole spiritual life of the Christian. "He who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him" (ibid.).

Let us love God with the work of our hands

3. In the context of the World Youth Day this year in Paris, I am about to beatify Frédéric Ozanam. I cordially greet Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger, Archbishop of Paris, the city which houses the tomb of the new blessed. I rejoice also in the presence at this event of Cardinals and Bishops from many countries. I affectionately greet the members of the St Vincent de Paul Society who have come from across the world for the beatification of their principal founder, as well as those representing the great spiritual family of St Vincent. The connection with the Vincentians was close from the beginning of the Society, since it was a Daughter of Charity, Sr Rosalie Rendu, who guided the young Frédéric Ozanam and his companions to the poor of the Mouffetard neighbourhood of Paris. Dear disciples of St Vincent de Paul, I encourage you to join forces so that the poor, as he who inspired you always wished, may be loved and better served, and that Jesus Christ be honoured in their person.

4. Frédéric Ozanam loved everyone who was deprived. From his youth, he became aware that it was not enough to speak about charity and the mission of the Church in the world: rather what was needed was an effective commitment of Christians in the service of the poor. He had the same intuition as St Vincent: "Let us love God, my brothers, let us love God, but let it be through the work of our hands, let it be by the sweat of our brow" (St Vincent de Paul, XI, 40). In order to show this concretely, at age 20, with a group of friends, he created the Conferences of St Vincent de Paul which aimed at helping the very poor, in a spirit of service and sharing. These Conferences rapidly spread beyond France to all the European countries and to the world. I myself as a student before the Second World War was a member of one of them.

From then on, the love of those in extreme need, of those with no one to care for them, became the centre of Frédéric Ozanam's life and concerns. Speaking of these men and women, he writes: "We must fall at their feet and say to them, like the Apostle: 'Tu es Dominus meus'. You are our masters and we are your servants; you are for us the sacred images of the God whom we do not see and, not knowing how to love him in another way, we love him through you" (To Louis Janmot).

5. He observed the real situation of the poor and sought to be more and more effective in helping them in their human development. He understood that charity must lead to efforts to remedy injustice. Charity and justice go together. He had the clear-sighted courage to seek a front-line social and political commitment in a troubled time in the life of his country, for no society can accept indigence as if it were a simple fatality without damaging its honour. So it is that we can see in him a precursor of the social doctrine of the Church which Pope Leo XIII would develop some years later in the Encyclical *Rerum novarum*.

Learn to defend your convictions without hate

Faced with all the forms of poverty which overwhelm so many men and women, charity is a prophetic sign of the commitment of the Christian in the following of Christ. I invite the laity, and in particular young people, to show courage and imagination in working to build a more fraternal society, where the less fortunate will be esteemed in all their dignity and will have the means to live in respect. With the humility and limitless confidence in Providence which characterized Frédéric Ozanam, have the boldness to share your material and spiritual possessions with those who are in difficulty!

6. Bl. Frédéric Ozanam, apostle of charity, exemplary spouse and father, grand figure of the Catholic laity of the 19th century, was a university student who played an important role in the intellectual movement of his time. A student, and then an eminent professor at Lyons and later at Paris, at the Sorbonne, he aimed above all at seeking and communicating the truth in serenity and respect for the convictions of those who did not share his own. "Learn to defend your convictions without hating your adversaries", he wrote, "to love those who think differently than yourselves, ... let us complain less about our times and more about ourselves" (Letters, 9 April 1851). With the courage of a believer, denouncing all selfishness, he participated actively in the renewal of the presence and action of the Church in the society of his time. His role in starting the Lenten Conferences in this Cathedral of Notre-Dame of Paris is well-known, with the goal of permitting young people to receive an updated religious instruction regarding the great questions confronting their faith. A man of thought and action, Frédéric Ozanam remains for today's university community, professors as well as students, a model of courageous commitment, capable of making heard a free and demanding voice in the search for the truth and the defense of the dignity of every human person. May he also be for them an invitation to holiness!

7. Today the Church confirms the kind of Christian life which Ozanam chose, as well as the path which he undertook. She tells him: Frédéric, your path has truly been the path of holiness. More than 100 years have passed and this is the opportune moment to rediscover that path. It is necessary that all these young people, nearly your own age, who have gathered together in such numbers here in Paris from all the countries of Europe and the world, should recognize that this path is also theirs. They must understand that, if they want to be authentic Christians, they must take the same road. May they open wider the eyes of the spirit to the needs of so many people today. May they see these needs as challenges. May Christ call them, each one by name, so that each one may say: this is my path! In the choices that they will make, your holiness, Frédéric, will be particularly confirmed. And your joy will be great. You who already see with your eyes the One who is love, be a guide for all these young people on the paths that they will choose, in following your example today!

**August 22, 1997**

Message for young prisoners

May peace and grace of repentance be yours

During his visit to France for World Youth Day the Holy Father sent a Message to Bishop Claude Frikart, C.J.M., Auxiliary of Paris, for young prisoners who were not able to participate in the various events

because of their incarceration. Here is a translation of his Message, which was written in French and dated 22 August.

To Bishop Claude Frikart  
Auxiliary Bishop of Paris for the young prisoners

Dear Young People,

During World Youth Day, I am thinking of you who are in prison at the present time. Your situation must not lead you to despair. You carry deep in your hearts the suffering linked to the reasons for your current detention. The Church is close to you. She wants to witness to the hope Christ brings us. No act can deprive you of the dignity that is yours as a child of God.

Let Christ dwell in your hearts! Entrust your ordeal to him! He will help you bear it. In secret and in silence, you can be united with the other young people who are meeting in Paris. Indeed, with your prayers, your sacrifices, your personal renewal, you share in the success of this great gathering and in your brothers' and sisters' conversion. Was it not by prayer alone that St Theresa of the Child Jesus made a prisoner's conversion possible, and without leaving her convent, did she not help the missionaries who struggled to proclaim the Gospel?

Dear young people, have trust! Be reconciled by Christ! May you obtain interior peace, the grace to repent, to be forgiven by God and, as you desire, to lead a better life from now on! With the help of your families, your friends and the Church, I hope you will return to your place in society, where you will be concerned to work at the service of your brothers and sisters, with respect for their persons and their possessions.

As I commend you to the Virgin Mary's motherly intercession, with the Bishops and priests who surround you today, I wholeheartedly bless you as well as all the members of your families.

Paris, 22 August 1997.

IOANNES PAULUS PP. II

### **August 23, 1997**

Message for the Way of the Cross

Carry your cross with Christ and offer him your lives

On Friday evening, 22 August, celebrations of the Way of the Cross were organized for the young people in various parts of Paris. For the occasion, the Holy Father offered the youths a meditation on the Way of the Cross, which was sent to Archbishop J. Francis Stafford, President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity. Here is a translation of his Message, which was written in French.

To Archbishop James Francis Stafford President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity  
for the Young People of the 12th World Youth Day, gathered on Friday, 22 August 1997, to meditate on the Way of the Cross

1. "Master, where do you live?". This evening, my dear young people, you have come to follow Christ as he advances on the way to his Passion. Lift your eyes to the face of the One who comes towards you and calls you. Whom do you seek in this Jesus, marked by sorrow, "his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance" (Is 52:14)? He is the Servant of God, the Son of the Most High who, carrying our pain, has made himself the servant of us all. Look upon him, listen to him in his pain and trial! It is in him, who experienced human weakness in everything except sin, that you will find healing for your hearts.

Through the weakness of a humiliated and despised man, God manifested his omnipotence. Jesus, the Innocent One, by freely accepting to go to the extreme of obedience to his Father who had sent him, became the witness of God's boundless love for all humanity. The mystery of our salvation is accomplished in the silence of Good Friday when a man, abandoned by all, bearing the weight of our sufferings, was delivered up to death on a Cross, his arms wide open in the gesture of embracing every man and woman. Could greater love be shown? A mystery that is difficult to grasp, a mystery of infinite love! A mystery that inaugurates the new and transfigured world of the kingdom. On this Cross, death has been overcome; from the death of

the Son of God made man, life has sprung. His fidelity to the Father's divine plan of love has not been in vain, it has led to the Resurrection.

2. The suffering Christ still dwells among the men and women of today. In order to reveal his power, God has come to share our deepest misery. In every person who is afflicted, beaten, mistreated, rejected, we can discover the Lord who travels the paths of humanity bearing his Cross. Dear friends, the Crucified One is ever with you, by the side of those who toil, who suffer, who die. All of you who toil and labour under your burden, come to where Christ dwells, carry your cross with him, present him the offering of your lives, and he will give you rest (cf. Mt 11:28). At your side, the loving presence of Mary, Mother of Jesus and your mother, will guide you and give you courage and comfort.

In a world in which evil appears to triumph, where hope sometimes seems extinguished, be close to one another as Christ has made himself close to you, in union with the martyrs of the faith, of brotherhood and of concern for others, with the witnesses to justice and freedom, with the victims of intolerance and discrimination, with all those who in so many nations torn apart by hatred or war have given their lives for their brothers and sisters. Do not look away; have the courage to reach out, to make a fraternal gesture, after the example of Simon of Cyrene who helped Jesus on his way to Calvary. Be daring artisans of reconciliation and of peace. Live together in solidarity and brotherly love. Make the Cross of the Saviour shine so as to announce to the world the victory of the Risen One, the victory of life over death!

3. Dear friends, contemplating the Cross of Christ, listening in silence to the word which he addresses to you, discover this God who counts on man, who confides in you and never despairs of anyone. He offers you his strength in order to make fruitful the seeds of peace and reconciliation which are in everyone's heart. The most humble acts of charity and fraternity witness to the presence of God. This evening, gathered together as members of the Church, Jesus again invites you to be open to his loving gaze upon you, to receive the forgiveness which will give you the courage to start out again on the road of life. He calls you to enter his light in order to begin a time of conversion and reconciliation. The sacrament of Penance that is being offered for you to receive is the sacrament of a love accepted and shared in the joy of a reconciled heart and of rediscovered brotherhood. Dear friends, accept this love which transforms your lives and opens to you the horizons of truth and freedom.

**August 23, 1997.**

IOANNES PAULUS PP,II

Mass for International Youth Forum

Let Word bear fruit in you Holy Father tells youth leaders that their gathering is like a new Pentecost

On Saturday morning, 23 August, the Holy Father celebrated Mass at the Church of Saint-Étienne du Mont in Paris with the 350 delegates to the International Youth Forum, which was held on 14-18 August at the École Polytechnique in Palaiseau, located 15 km. from the city centre. After the reading of the Gospel in English (Mt 13:1-9, 18-23), the Pope preached the following homily in French. Here is a translation.

1. "May all peoples know you, Lord!". These words of today's liturgy are addressed to all of you, representing the nations taking part in the World Youth Day in Paris. Your presence here bears witness to the success of the mission which the Apostles received from Christ after his Resurrection: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28:19). You are the representatives of the peoples to whom the Gospel has been proclaimed and who have accepted it, of the peoples whose cultures the Gospel has penetrated and transfigured.

You are here not only because you have received the faith and Baptism, but also because you want to transmit this faith to others. So many hearts await the Gospel! The cry of today's liturgy can find all its meaning on your lips: "May all the nations know you, Lord!".

2. The World Youth Day clearly has a missionary dimension. Today's liturgy indicates as much. The first reading from the Book of Isaiah says: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good tidings, who publishes peace, who brings good tidings of good, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns"" (52:7). The prophet is certainly thinking of the messiah awaited at that time.

This will be Christ the Messiah, who will announce the Good News. Indeed, he will transmit this Good News to the Apostles. By sharing in his prophetic, priestly, and royal mission, they, and in turn all the People of God of the New Covenant, will become messengers of Good News to the whole world. The words of the prophet apply to them: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good tidings".

Become fertile ground for receiving the Gospel

These words apply to you who are gathered here, you who participate in the World Youth Day from all the nations under the sun. Your coming together is like a new Pentecost. And so it should be! Like the Apostles in the Upper Room, and beyond what our senses perceive, we must hear the sound, the irruption of a violent wind. May the tongues of fire of the Holy Spirit come to rest over the heads of all those who are here, and may all begin to proclaim in different languages the marvels of God (cf. Acts 2:1-4). Then you will be witnesses to the Good News in the third millennium.

3. The reading of the Gospel of St Matthew makes us think back to the parable of the sower. We know the parable, but we can reread the words of the Gospel over and over again and still find new light. So the sower comes out to sow. As he sows, some seeds fall on the path, some on rocky ground, some among thorns, some finally on good soil, and only these last gave fruit (cf. Mt 13:3-8).

Jesus did not limit himself to presenting us with a parable; he explained it. Let us hear then the explanation of the parable of the sower. The seeds that fell on the path represent those who hear the word of the kingdom of God but do not understand it. The Evil One comes and takes away what has been sown in their hearts (cf. Mt 13:19). The Evil One often uses this tactic and he tries to prevent the seed from germinating in people's hearts. This is the first comparison. The second is the seed fallen on rocky ground. This ground represents the people who hear the word and welcome it immediately with joy, but they do not have roots in them and are inconstant. When tribulation or persecution comes because of the word, they fall away immediately (cf. Mt 13:20-21). What psychological insight in this comparison made by Christ! We know well from our experience and the experience of others the inconstancy of people deprived of the roots which would enable the word to grow! The third case is the seed fallen among thorns. Christ explains that he is thinking of those who hear the word but who, because of the worries of the world and their attachment to riches, stifle the word so that it does not bear fruit (cf. Mt 13:22).

Finally, the seed fallen on fertile ground represents those who hear the word and understand it, and the word bears fruit in them (cf. Mt 13:23). All of this magnificent parable speaks to us today as it spoke to the listeners of Jesus 2,000 years ago. In the course of this world meeting of youth, let us become the fertile ground which receives the Gospel and bears fruit!

The Spirit of truth will lead us into the entire Truth

4. Bearing in mind that the human soul hesitates to welcome the word of God, let us address the Spirit with this ardent liturgical prayer:

Veni Creator Spiritus  
 Mentis tuorum visita,  
 Imple superna gratia,  
 Quae tu creasti pectora.  
 Come, O Creator Spirit,  
 Visit the souls of those who belong  
 to you;  
 Fill with your grace from on high  
 The hearts which you have made.

In this prayer we open our hearts, imploring the Spirit to fill them with light and life.

Spirit of God, make us ready to receive your visit. Make faith in the word which saves grow in us. Be the living source of the hope which blossoms in our lives. Be in us the breath of love which transforms us, and the fire of charity which impels us to give ourselves to the service of our brothers and sisters.

You whom the Father has sent, teach us all things and make us grasp the richness of the word of Christ. Strengthen our inner being, make us pass from fear to confidence, so that the praise of your glory may burst forth from us.

Be the light that fills people's hearts and gives them the courage to seek you unceasingly. You, Spirit of truth, lead us to the entire Truth, so that we may firmly proclaim the mystery of the living God who is active in our history. Enlighten us as to the ultimate meaning of this history.

Take away the unfaithfulness which separates us from you. Cast out from us all resentment and division. Make the spirit of brotherhood and unity grow in us, so that we may know how to build the city of man in the peace and solidarity that come from God.

Help us to discover that love is the most intimate part of divine life, and that we are called to share in it. Teach us how to love one another as the Father has loved us by giving us his Son (cf. Jn 3:16).

May all peoples know you, God, Father of all, whom your Son Jesus has come to reveal to us, you who have sent us your Spirit in order to give us the fruits of Redemption!

5. This morning I cordially greet the members of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, who organize the International Youth Forum which has brought you together for this time of reflection and prayer. I thank all those who have ensured the success of this encounter, particularly the persons responsible for the École Polytechnique, who have hosted it with willing generosity.

Bl. Frédéric Ozanam offers us an ideal of holiness

Dear friends, yesterday in the Cathedral of Notre-Dame of Paris, I beatified Frédéric Ozanam, a layman and young person like yourselves. I gladly recall this in this church of Saint-Étienne du Mont, since it was here that he initiated his first activities with other young people in favour of the poor of the neighbourhood. Enlightened by the Spirit of Christ and faithful to daily meditation on the Word, Bl. Frédéric provides us with an ideal of holiness for today, that of the gift of self at the service of the most needy in society. I hope that in your memories of this 12th World Youth Day he will stand out as a friend and model for you in your witness as Christian young people!

6. During the course of the intense days which you have spent here, you too have gone in search of Christ and you have let yourselves be penetrated by the Word, so that it may blossom and bear fruit. Having had an exceptional experience of the universality of the Church and of the patrimony common to all the disciples of Christ, you have given thanks for the marvels which God brings about in the heart of humanity. You have also shared the sufferings, anxieties, hopes and longings of the people of today.

This morning, the Holy Spirit sends you like "a letter from Christ", to proclaim in each of your countries the works God has done, and to be ardent witnesses of the Gospel of Christ among people of good will to the ends of the earth. The mission which has been entrusted to you requires that, throughout the whole of your lives, you take the time needed for your spiritual and doctrinal formation, in order that you may deepen your own faith and, in turn, deepen the faith of others. Thus you will answer the call "to growth and to a continual process of maturation, of always bearing much fruit" (Christifideles laici, n. 57).

May this time of spiritual renewal which you have lived together commit you to advance with all your Christian brothers and sisters in the search of the unity which Christ wishes. May he lead you with fraternal charity to meet the men and women who have other religious or intellectual convictions, so as to advance in the authentic knowledge and mutual respect which lead us to grow in our humanity. The Spirit of God sends you with your brothers and sisters of the whole world to be builders of a reconciled civilization founded on fraternal love. At the advent of the third millennium, I invite you to be attentive to the voice and the signs of the presence and action of the Holy Spirit in the Church and in the world. Contemplating and imitating the Virgin Mary, model of living faith, you will then be true disciples of Christ, her divine Son, the foundation of hope, the source of life. My very dear young people, the Church has need of you; she needs your commitment at the service of the Gospel. The Pope too counts on you. Receive the fire of the Spirit of the Lord to become fervent heralds of the Good News!

August 23, 1997

Baptismal Vigil with young people

You have been chosen by Christ to live in the freedom of God's children. On Saturday evening, 23 August, the Holy Father went to Longchamps Racecourse on the outskirts of Paris for a Prayer Vigil with the young people attending World Youth Day. During the service the Pope baptized 10 catechumens from all the continents, who were presented to him by Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger, Archbishop of Paris, and Archbishop J. Francis Stafford, President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity. Brief testimonies were also given by a catechumen, a godfather and a godmother. After the reading of the Gospel (Jn 3:1-6) the Holy Father gave the following meditation in French. Here is a translation.

Dear Young People,

Dear Friends,

1. I begin by greeting all of you who are gathered here, and I do so with the words of the Prophet Ezekiel: for these words contain a marvellous promise from God and express the joy of your presence. "I will take you from the nations ... a new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my decrees.... You shall be my people, and I will be your God" (36:24-28).

2. I greet the French Bishops who are hosting us, and the Bishops from so many parts of the world. I also extend cordial greetings to the eminent representatives of the other Christian confessions with whom we share the same Baptism, and who have wished to take part in this youth celebration.

On the eve of 24 August we cannot forget the sad Massacre of St Bartholomew's Day, an event of very obscure causes in the political and religious history of France. Christians did things which the Gospel condemns. If I speak of the past, it is because "acknowledging the weaknesses of the past is an act of honesty and courage which helps us to strengthen our faith, which alerts us to face today's temptations and challenges and prepares us to meet them" (*Tertio millennio adveniente*, n. 33). Therefore I willingly support the initiatives of the French Bishops, for, with them, I am convinced that only forgiveness, offered and received, leads little by little to a fruitful dialogue, which will in turn ensure a fully Christian reconciliation. Belonging to different religious traditions must not constitute today a source of opposition and tension. Quite the contrary, our common love for Christ impels us to seek tirelessly the path of full unity.

Son of God became man for each one of you

3. The liturgical texts of our Vigil are, in part, the same as those used for the Easter Vigil. They speak of Baptism. The Gospel of St John recounts Christ's night-time conversation with Nicodemus. Having come in search of Christ, this member of the Sanhedrin declares his faith: "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do, unless God is with him" (3:2). Jesus answers him: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (3:3). Nicodemus asks him: "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" (3:4). Jesus replies: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (3:5-6).

Jesus makes Nicodemus pass from things visible to things invisible. Each one of us is born of man and woman, of a father and a mother; this birth is the point of departure of our whole existence. Nicodemus is thinking in terms of this natural event. On the other hand, Christ came into the world to reveal a different birth, the spiritual birth. When we profess our faith we proclaim who Christ is: "We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father (*consubstantialis Patri*). Through him all things were made (*per quem omnia facta sunt*). For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man (*descendit de*



caelis et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria virgine et homo factus est)". Yes, young friends, the Son of God became man for you, for each one of you!

4. "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (Jn 3:5). Thus, in order to enter the kingdom, a person must be born anew, not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. Baptism is precisely the sacrament of this birth. The Apostle Paul gives a profound explanation of this in the passage from the Letter to the Romans which we have heard: "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (6:3-4). The Apostle gives us here the meaning of this new birth; he shows why the sacrament of Baptism takes place by immersion into water. This is not a merely symbolic immersion into the life of God. Baptism is the concrete and effective sign of immersion into Christ's Death and Resurrection. We understand, then, why tradition has linked Baptism to the Easter Vigil. It is on that day, and above all on that night, that the Church relives Christ's death, that the Church as a whole is caught up in the cataclysm of that death from which a new life will burst forth. Therefore, the Vigil, in the precise meaning of the word, is an act of waiting; the Church awaits the Resurrection; she awaits the life which will be victorious over death and will lead man into life.

Live now as children of the light

Everyone who receives this Baptism is given a share in Christ's Resurrection. St Paul returns often to this theme which sums up the essence of the true meaning of Baptism. He writes: "If we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his" (Rom 6:5). And also: "We know that our old self is crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For he who has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. For we know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Rom 6:6-11). With Paul, dear young people, you say to the world: our hope is steadfast; through Christ we live for God.

5. In recalling this evening the Easter Vigil, we are touching upon fundamental questions: life and death, mortality and immortality. In the history of humanity Jesus Christ has reversed the meaning of human existence. If everyday experience shows us this existence as a passage towards death, the paschal mystery opens to us the perspective of a new life beyond death. That is why the Church, which professes her belief in Jesus' Death and Resurrection, has every reason to speak these words: "We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come".

6. Dear young people, do you know what the sacrament of Baptism does to you? God acknowledges you as his children and transforms your existence into a story of love with him. He conforms you to Christ so that you will be able to fulfil your personal vocation. He has come to make a pact with you and he offers you his peace. Live from now on as children of the light who know that they are reconciled by the Cross of the Saviour!

Baptism makes you share in the Church's life

Baptism "mystery and hope of the world to come" (St Cyril of Jerusalem, Procatechesis, 10, 12) is the most beautiful of God's gifts, inviting us to become disciples of the Lord. It brings us into intimacy with God, into the life of the Trinity, from this day forward and on into eternity. It is a grace given to the sinner, a grace which purifies us from sin and opens to us a new future. It is a bath which washes and regenerates. It is an anointing which conforms us to Christ, Priest, Prophet and King. It is an enlightenment which illumines our path and gives it full meaning. It is a garment of strength and perfection. Dressed in white on the day of our Baptism, as we shall be on the last day, we are called to preserve every day its bright splendour and to discover it anew, through forgiveness, prayer and Christian living. Baptism is the sign that God has joined us on our journey, that he makes our existence more beautiful and that he transforms our history into a history of holiness.

You have been called, chosen by Christ to live in the freedom of the children of God; you have been confirmed in your baptismal vocation by the Holy Spirit who dwells in you, in order that you may proclaim the Gospel all your lives. In receiving Confirmation, you commit yourselves to using all your strength in order to make the gift which you have received grow step by step through the reception of the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist and Penance which sustain in us the life received at Baptism. As baptized individuals, you bear witness to Christ by your concern for a life that is upright and faithful to the Lord, maintained by means of a spiritual and moral struggle. Faith and moral behaviour are linked. In fact, the gift received leads us to a permanent conversion, so that we might imitate Christ and be worthy of the divine promise. The word of God transforms the lives of those who accept it, because it is the rule of faith and action. In their lives, in order to respect fundamental values, Christians also experience that suffering which can result from moral choices opposed to worldly behaviour and which therefore can be heroic. But this is the price of the life of blessed happiness with the Lord. Dear young people, this is the price of your witness. I count on your courage and fidelity.

7. It is in the midst of your brothers and sisters that you are to live as Christians. In Baptism God has given us a mother, the Church, with whom we grow spiritually in order that we may walk the path of holiness. This sacrament incorporates you as members of a people, it makes you sharers in the life of the Church and gives you brothers and sisters to love, in order that you might be "one in Christ" (Gal 3:28). In the Church, no longer are there borders; we are one people standing together, made up of many groups with different cultures, attitudes and modes of behaviour, in communion with the Bishops, the pastors of the flock. This unity is a sign of richness and vitality. In diversity, your first concern must be for unity and fraternal cohesion, which will enable personal development to take place in a serene way and allow the whole body to grow.

The Church is counting on you

Baptism and Confirmation, however, do not remove us from the world, for we share the joys and hopes of people today and we make our contribution to the human community, in the life of society and in every technical and scientific field. Thanks to Christ, we are close to all of our brothers and sisters, and we are called to show the profound joy which is found in living with him. The Lord calls us to undertake our mission right where we are, for "the place which God has assigned to us is so beautiful that we may never abandon it" (cf. Epistle to Diognetus, VI, 10). Whatever we do, our existence is for the Lord: that is our hope and our title to glory. In the Church, the presence of young people, catechumens and newly baptized is a great treasure and a source of vitality for the whole Christian community, called to account for its faith and to bear witness to that faith to the ends of the earth.

8. One day, at Capernaum, when many of the disciples left Jesus, Peter responded to Jesus' question: "Do you also wish to go away?", by saying: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (cf. Jn 6:67, 68). At this World Youth Day in Paris, one of the capitals of the modern world, the Successor of Peter comes to tell you once more that these words of the Apostle must be the beacon which enlightens you on your journey. "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (Jn 6:68). More still: not only do you speak to us of eternal life, but you yourself are that life. Truly, you are "the Way, and the Truth, and the Life" (Jn 14:6).

9. Dear young people, by your baptismal anointing you have become members of the holy people. By your anointing at Confirmation you share fully in the Church's mission. The Church, of which you are a part, has confidence in you and is counting on you. May your Christian lives be a progressive "getting used to" life with God, according to the beautiful expression of St Irenaeus, so that you may be missionaries of the Gospel!

At the end of the Vigil, the Holy Father greeted the young people in various languages. To the English-speaking he said:

To all the English-speaking young people who are in attendance at this evening Vigil I extend a special greeting. Remember that you are never alone; Christ is with you on your journey every day of your lives! He has called you and chosen you to live in the freedom of the children of God. Turn to him in prayer and in love. Ask him to grant you the courage and strength to live in this freedom always. Walk with him who is "the Way, the Truth and the Life"!

After greeting the young people, the Holy Father spoke extemporaneously in French:

Dear friends, tomorrow morning we are going to celebrate the Eucharist together. Our friends, who were just baptized this evening, are going to receive the Body and Blood of Christ for the first time. Take advantage of this beautiful night to rest. Also use it for prayer, alone or in groups. In this way prepare your hearts to enter tomorrow into the thanksgiving that Jesus offers the Father. Now we can give thanks in the joy of prayer with the Virgin Mary's canticle, the Magnificat.

**August 24, 1997**

Be active members of the Church!

Holy Father celebrates closing Mass in Paris for 12th World Youth Day

"Forgiven and reconciled, be faithful to the Baptism which you have received! Be witnesses to the Gospel! As active and responsible members of the Church, be disciples and witnesses of Jesus Christ who reveals the Father! And abide always in the unity of the Spirit who is the giver of life!", the Holy Father told a million young people from across the world who had gathered in Paris, France, for the 12th World Youth Day. The culmination of the week-long meeting was the Mass the Pope celebrated on Sunday, 24 August, at Longchamp Racecourse. The Holy Father's homily was a reflection on the theme for World Youth Day, "Teacher, where are staying? Come and see". The Pope said that the Church's answer to the Lord's question is the Eucharist: "Christ is present in the Eucharist, in the sacrament of his Death and Resurrection.... It is the gift of the real presence of Jesus the Redeemer, in the bread which is his Body given up for us, in the wine which is his Blood poured out for all". Here is a translation of the Holy Father's homily, which was given in French.

Mass for World Youth Day -- Homily of the Holy Father

World Youth Day -- Sunday, 24 August 1997 -- Longchamp

1. "Teacher, where are you staying?" (Jn 1:38). This is the question which Jesus was asked one day by two young men. This happened on the banks of the Jordan. Jesus had gone there to receive the baptism of John. But the Baptist, when he saw Jesus coming towards him, said: "Behold, the Lamb of God" (Jn 1:36). These prophetic words indicated the Redeemer, the one who was to give his life for the salvation of the world. And so, even from the baptism in the Jordan, John pointed out the Crucified One. In fact, two disciples of John, upon hearing these words, followed Jesus. Is this not significant? When Jesus asks them: "What do you seek?" (Jn 1:38), they answer him with a question of their own: "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" (ibid.). Jesus replies: "Come and see". "They came and saw where he was staying; and they stayed with him that day" (Jn 1:39). They became the first disciples of Jesus. One of them was Andrew, who also brought his brother Simon Peter to Jesus.

Dear friends, I am happy to be able to meditate upon this Gospel with you, together with the Cardinals and Bishops who have joined us. I am pleased to greet them, especially Cardinal Eduardo Pironio who has worked so hard for the World Youth Days. I am grateful to Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger for his welcome, to Bishop Michel Dubost and to the Bishops of France and those from many countries of the world who are accompanying you and who have guided your reflections. My cordial greeting also goes to the concelebrating priests, the men and women religious, and the leaders of your movements and diocesan groups.

I thank our brothers and sisters from other Christian communities, as well as the civil authorities, for their presence and for their participation in this liturgical celebration.

In greeting you again, I wish in particular to express affection and encouragement to the handicapped among you; we are all grateful that you are with us and have brought your testimony of faith and hope.

In the name of all present, I would also like to express gratitude to the many volunteers who have worked so hard and so effectively in organizing this gathering.

2. The few lines of the Gospel of John which we have just heard sum up the programme of World Youth Day: it is an exchange of questions, and then an answer which is also an appeal. In presenting this encounter

with Jesus, today's liturgy wants to show that which counts most in your lives. As the Successor of Peter, I too have come to invite you to ask Christ: "Where are you staying?". If you ask him this question sincerely, you will be able to hear his response and receive from him the courage and strength to carry it out.

The question is born of a quest. Men and women seek God. Young people realize in the depths of their being that this quest is the inner law of their lives. Human beings seek their way in the visible world and, through the visible world, they seek the unseen world at every stage of their spiritual journey. Each of us can repeat the words of the Psalmist: "Your face, Lord, do I seek; hide not your face from me" (Ps 27:8-9). We all have our personal history and an innate desire to see God, a desire which makes itself felt at the same time as we discover the created world. This world is wonderful and rich; it sets before us countless treasures; it enchants us; it attracts both our reason and our will. But in the end it does not satisfy our spirit. Man realizes that this world, with all its many riches, is superficial and precarious; in a sense, it is destined for death. Nowadays, we are more aware of the fragility of our earth, too often degraded by the hand of man himself, to whom the Creator entrusted it.

As regards man himself, each person comes into the world, is born from a mother's womb, grows and matures. We discover our vocation and develop our personality throughout our years of activity; then the moment comes when we must leave this world. The longer we live, the more we realize how precarious life is, and the more we wonder about immortality: what exists beyond the frontiers of death? Then, from the depths of our being, there arises the same question asked of the one who conquered death: "Rabbi, where are you staying?". Teacher, you who love and respect the human person, you who have shared in human suffering, you who illumine the mystery of human existence, help us to discover the true meaning of our life and vocation! "Your face, Lord, do I seek; hide not your face from me" (Ps 27:8-9).

3. On the banks of the Jordan, and much later still, the disciples failed to realize who Jesus truly was. It took them a long time to understand the mystery of the Son of God. We too have an innate desire to know the one who reveals the face of God. Christ answered the question of his disciples by way of his entire messianic mission. He taught and, in order to confirm the truth of what he proclaimed, he worked great miracles, healing the sick, raising the dead, calming the storms of the sea. But this whole extraordinary journey reached its fulfilment on Golgotha. It is by contemplating Christ on the Cross, with the eyes of faith, that we can "see" who the Saviour really is: the one who bore our sufferings, the just man who made his life a sacrifice and who would bring righteousness to many (cf. Is 53:4,10-11).

Saint Paul sums up the highest wisdom in today's second reading with these striking words: "The word of the Cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will thwart' . . . Since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe . . . We preach Christ crucified" (1 Cor 1:18-23). The Apostle was speaking to the people of his time, to the children of Israel who had received God's revelation on Mount Sinai and to the Greeks who had developed an impressive human wisdom, a great philosophy. But now, the unsurpassable culmination of wisdom is the Crucified Christ, not only because of his words, but because he delivered himself up for the salvation of humanity.

With his remarkable fervour, Saint Paul repeats: "We preach Christ Crucified". He whom the world considered as nothing but weakness and folly is the one whom we proclaim as Power and Wisdom, the fulness of Truth. It is true that our confidence has its highs and lows. Certainly our vision of faith is often darkened by doubt and by our own weakness. Humble and poor sinners that we are, let us accept the message of the Cross. In order to answer our question: "Rabbi, where are you staying?", Christ summons us: come and see; in the Cross you will see the radiant sign of the world's redemption, the loving presence of the living God. Because Christians realize that the Cross dominates history, they place the crucifix in their churches and along roadsides, or they wear it near their hearts. For the Cross is a genuine sign of the presence of the Son of God; by this sign he is revealed as the Redeemer of the world.

4. "Rabbi, where are you staying?". Each day the Church responds: Christ is present in the Eucharist, in the sacrament of his death and resurrection. In and through the Eucharist, you acknowledge the dwelling-place of the living God in human history. For the Eucharist is the sacrament of the love which conquers death; it is the sacrament of the Covenant, pure gift of love for the reconciliation of all humanity. It is the gift of the real presence of Jesus the Redeemer, in the bread which is his body given up for us, in the wine

which is his blood poured out for all. Thanks to the Eucharist, constantly renewed among all the peoples of the world, Christ continues to build his Church: he brings us together in praise and thanksgiving for salvation, in the communion which only infinite love can forge. Our worldwide gathering now takes on its fullest meaning, through the celebration of Mass. Dear young friends, may your presence here mean a true commitment in faith! For Christ is now answering your own question and the questions of all those who seek the living God. He answers by offering an invitation: this is my Body, take it and eat. To the Father he entrusts his supreme desire: that all those whom he loves may be one in the same communion.

5. The response to the question "Teacher, where do you live?" involves many aspects. It has an historical, paschal and sacramental dimension. Today's first reading suggests yet another aspect of the answer to the question which is the theme of the World Youth Day: Christ dwells among his People. This is the people mentioned in the Book of Deuteronomy in relation to the history of Israel: "It is because the Lord loves you . . . that [he] has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of bondage . . . Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps his covenant . . . to a thousand generations" (Dt 7:8-9). Israel is the people whom God chose for himself and with whom he made a covenant.

In the New Covenant, God's election has been extended to all the peoples of the earth. In Jesus Christ, God has chosen all humanity for his own. Through the Redemption he has revealed the universality of his election. In Christ, there is no longer Jew or Greek, nor slave or free; all are now one (cf. Gal 3:28). Everyone is called to share in God's life, thanks to the death and resurrection of Christ. Does not our encounter at this World Youth Day reflect this truth? All of you, assembled here from many countries and continents, bear witness to the universal vocation of the People of God redeemed by Christ! The ultimate answer to the question "Teacher, where are you staying?" should then be understood as: I live in all the human beings who have been saved. Yes, Christ dwells in his People, the People which has struck root among all the peoples of the earth, the People which follows him, the Crucified and Risen Lord, the Redeemer of the world, the Teacher who has the words of everlasting life, the one who is "the head of the new and universal people of the children of God" (Lumen Gentium, 13). The Second Vatican Council has said it wonderfully: "Christ has shared with us his Spirit who, being one and the same being in head and members, gives life to, unifies and moves the whole body" (ibid., 7). Thanks to the Church which gives us a share in the very life of the Lord, all of us can now repeat Peter's words to Jesus: "To whom shall we go? To whom else shall we go? (cf. Jn 6:68).

6. Dear young people, your journey does not end here. Time does not come to a halt. Go forth now along the roads of the world, along the pathways of humanity, while remaining ever united in Christ's Church!

Continue to contemplate God's glory and God's love, and you will receive the enlightenment needed to build the civilization of love, to help our brothers and sisters to see the world transfigured by God's eternal wisdom and love.

Forgiven and reconciled, be faithful to the Baptism which you have received! Be witnesses to the Gospel! As active and responsible members of the Church, be disciples and witnesses of Jesus Christ who reveals the Father! And abide always in the unity of the Spirit who is the giver of life!

**August 24, 1997**

Sunday Angelus meditation

St Theresa of Child Jesus to be proclaimed doctor of the Church

"In response to many requests, and after attentive study, I have the joy to announce that on Mission Sunday, 19 October 1997, in St Peter's Basilica in Rome, I will proclaim St Theresa of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face a doctor of the Church", the Holy Father said before leading the recitation of the Angelus on Sunday, 24 August, at the close of the Mass for World Youth Day in Paris, France. The Pope called her spiritual teaching "a true science of love, ... the luminous expression of her knowledge of the mystery of Christ and of her personal experience of grace". Here is a translation of his reflection, which was given in French.

1. At the close of this World Youth Day in France, I wish to recall the great figure of St Theresa of Lisieux, who entered into Life 100 years ago.

This young Carmelite was entirely captivated by the love of God. She lived the radical offering of herself in response to that love. In the simplicity of daily life she also knew how to practise fraternal love. Imitating Jesus, she willingly sat at the table of sinners, her brothers and sisters, so that they might be purified by love, for she was animated by an ardent desire to see everyone "enlightened by the luminous torch of faith" (cf. Ms C, 6 r°).

Theresa was familiar with physical suffering and the testing of faith. But she remained faithful because in her great spiritual understanding she knew that God was just and merciful; she perceived that love is more something received from God than something given by man. In the depths of darkness, she placed her hope in Jesus, the suffering Servant who gave his life for many (cf. Is 53:12).

2. Theresa always had the book of the Gospels at hand (cf. Letter193). She penetrated its message with an extraordinary certainty of judgement. She understood that in the life of God, Father, Son and Spirit, "love and faithfulness meet" (Ps 85:10). In a few years, she ran "a giant's course" ( Ms A, 44 v°). She discovered that her vocation was to be love itself in the heart of the Church. Humble and poor, Theresa shows the "little way" of children who confide in the Father with "bold trust". The heart of her message, her spiritual attitude, is for all the faithful.

Theresa's teaching, a true science of love, is the luminous expression of her knowledge of the mystery of Christ and of her personal experience of grace; she helps the men and women of today, and she will help those of tomorrow, to be more aware of the gifts of God and to spread the Good News of his infinite love.

3. Carmelite and apostle, mistress of spiritual wisdom for many consecrated persons and lay people, patroness of the missions, St Theresa has a privileged place in the Church. Her eminent teaching deserves to be considered among the most fruitful.

In response to many requests, and after attentive study, I have the joy to announce that on Mission Sunday, 19 October 1997, in St Peter's Basilica in Rome, I will proclaim St Theresa of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face a doctor of the Church.

I have wished solemnly to announce this event here, because the message of St Theresa, a holy young woman so present to our times, is of particular interest to you, young people. In the school of the Gospel she indicates to you the path of Christian maturity. She calls you to an infinite generosity; she invites you remain in the heart of the Church as disciples and ardent witnesses of Christ's charity.

Let us invoke St Theresa so that she will lead the men and women of our times on the path of Truth and Life!

With Theresa let us turn to the Virgin Mary, whom she honoured and to whom she prayed with filial confidence throughout her life.

Before leading the recitation of the Angelus, the Holy Father greeted those present in various languages. To the English-speaking he said:

It is time for us to say goodbye! As you go back to your family and friends, in all the many countries from which you come, bring the joy and the light of Christ with you.

"Jesus Christ, the one Saviour of the world, yesterday, today and forever" (cf. Heb 13:8). He is the only true beacon of hope for the human family, called to overcome enormous challenges on the way to genuine freedom, justice and peace among peoples and nations. He is also the Teacher who sheds light on the path of each one of us. He is our courage and our strength.

The Pope invites you to entrust yourselves to him, to follow wherever he calls. May the Holy Spirit fill you with wisdom and courage. Do not be afraid! The victory already belongs to Christ. And each one of you is an important part of his mission and his victory. The grace of Christ be with you always!

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At the end of his greetings the Holy Father said:

Dear young people, I am making an appointment with you for the next World Youth Day in Rome, during the summer of the Year 2000. I am sure that you will come in great numbers to this extraordinary meeting. During the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 we will share an experience of spiritual communion that will certainly leave its mark on your lives. Time will tell. Thank you for the splendid days in Paris. See you in Rome.

**November 30, 1997**

MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER  
ON THE OCCASION  
OF THE 13TH WORLD YOUTH DAY

"The Holy Spirit will teach you all things" (cf. Jn 14:26).

Dear Young Friends,

1. "I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, thankful for your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil 1:36).

I greet you with the words of the Apostle Paul "because I hold you in my heart" (ibid., 7). Yes - as I assured you on that unforgettable World Day celebrated in Paris - the Pope thinks about you and loves you; he reaches out to you daily with affectionate thoughts and accompanies you with prayer; he trusts you and counts on you, on your Christian commitment and on your collaboration in the Gospel cause.

Holy Spirit makes Christ's Revelation present

2. As you know, the second year of the preparatory phase of the Great Jubilee began with the First Sunday of Advent and is dedicated "in a particular way to the Holy Spirit and to his sanctifying presence within the community of Christ's disciples" (Tertio millennio adveniente, n. 44). With a view to the celebration of the next World Youth Day, I invite you, in communion with the whole Church, to look to the Spirit of the Lord, who renews the face of the earth (cf. Ps 104 [103]:30).

"The Church", in fact, "cannot prepare for the new millennium 'in any other way than in the Holy Spirit. What was accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit 'in the fullness of time' can only through the Spirit's power now emerge from the memory of the Church. The Spirit, in fact, makes present in the Church of every time and place the unique Revelation brought by Christ to humanity, making it alive and active in the soul of each individual" (Tertio millennio adveniente, n. 44).

For the next World Day, I consider it fitting to suggest these words of Jesus for your reflection and prayer: "The Holy Spirit will teach you all things" (cf. Jn 14:26). Our age appears disoriented and confused; sometimes it even seems no longer to know the difference between good and evil; God is apparently rejected, because he is unknown or ignored.

In this situation, it is important to go in spirit to the Upper Room, to relive the mystery of Pentecost (cf. Acts 2:1-11) and to "let [ourselves] be taught" by God's Spirit, docilely and humbly enrolling in his school, so as to acquire that "wisdom of heart" (Ps 90 [89]:12) which sustains and nourishes our life.

To believe is to see things as God sees them, to share God's vision of the world and of man according to the words of the psalm: "for in your light do we see light" (Ps 36 [35]:9). This "light of faith" in us is a ray of the Holy Spirit's light. In the Sequence of Pentecost we pray thus: "O most blessed light divine, shine within these hearts of thine, and our inmost being fill!".

Jesus thought it was important to stress the mysterious character of the Holy Spirit: "The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes; so it is with every one who is born of the Spirit" (Jn 3:8). So should we give up trying to understand? Jesus thought

precisely the contrary, since he assures us that the Holy Spirit himself can guide us "into all the truth" (Jn 16:13).

3. An extraordinary light on the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity comes to those who want to meditate in and with the Church on the mystery of Easter and Pentecost.

Jesus was "designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his Resurrection from the dead" (Rom 1:4).

After the Resurrection, the Teacher's presence warms the hearts of his disciples. "Did not our hearts burn within us?" (Lk 24:32), say the travelers on the road to Emmaus. His words enlighten them: never had they said with such strong conviction: "My Lord and my God!" (Jn 20:28). He heals them of doubt, sorrow, discouragement, fear and sin; a new brotherhood is given them; an unexpected communion with the Lord and with their brethren replaces their isolation and loneliness: "go to my brethren" (Jn 20:17).

During his public life, Jesus' words and actions could only reach a few thousand people in a given place and time. Now the same words and actions know no bounds of space or culture. "This is my body which is given for you.... This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you" (cf. Lk 22:19-20): it is enough for his Apostles to do this "in memory of him", in accordance with his explicit request, for he is truly present in the Eucharist, with his body and with his blood, in every part of the world. It is enough that they repeat the act of forgiveness and healing, so that he may pardon them: "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven" (cf. Jn 20:23).

When he was with his own, Jesus was hurried; he was preoccupied about the limits of time: "My time has not yet come" (Jn 7:6); "The light is with you for a little longer" (Jn 12:35). After the Resurrection, his relationship with time is no longer the same, but his presence continues: "I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Mt 28:20).

This transformation in depth, extent and duration of our Lord and Saviour's presence is the work of the Spirit.

Christ's work is fulfilled by the gift of the Holy Spirit

4. Furthermore, when the risen Christ makes himself present in people's lives and gives them his Spirit (cf. Jn 20:22), they completely change, although they remain, indeed become, fully themselves. Paul's example is particularly significant: the blinding light on the road to Damascus made him a man freer than he had ever been; free with true freedom, that of the living One before whom he fell to the ground (cf. Acts 9:1-30)! His experience would enable him to write to the Christians of Rome: "But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the return you get is sanctification and its end, eternal life" (Rom 6:22).

All that Jesus had begun to do with his followers in the three years of their life together is brought to fulfilment by the gift of the Spirit. The Apostles' faith is at first imperfect and hesitant, but later becomes strong and fruitful: he causes the lame to walk (cf. Acts 3:1-10), while he puts to flight unclean spirits (Acts 5:16). They who once trembled for fear of the people and the authorities confront the crowd gathered in the temple and challenge the Sanhedrin (cf. Acts 4:1-14). Peter, whose fear of a woman's accusations had led him to make his triple denial (cf. Mk 14:66-72), now behaves like the "rock" that Jesus wanted (cf. Mt 16:18). Even the others, inclined until that moment to disputes caused by ambition (cf. Mk 9:33), can now be "of one heart and soul" and share everything (cf. Acts 4:32). They who had learned from Jesus so imperfectly and with such difficulty how to pray, love and go out on mission, now truly pray, truly love, are truly missionaries and truly apostles.

This is the work that the Spirit of Jesus accomplishes in his Apostles!

5. What happened yesterday continues to happen in the Christian community today. Through the work of the One who is the "living remembrance" of Jesus (cf. Jn 14:26) in the heart of the Church, Jesus' paschal mystery reaches and transforms us. He is the Holy Spirit who, through the visible, audible and tangible signs of the sacraments, permits us to see, listen and touch humanity glorified by the risen Christ.

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The mystery of Pentecost, as a gift of the Spirit to each one, is made present in a privileged way by Confirmation, which is the sacrament of Christian growth and spiritual maturity. In it, each member of the faithful receives a deepening of the baptismal grace and is fully inserted into the messianic and apostolic community, while he is "confirmed" in that familiarity with the Father and with Christ, who wants him to be a witness and to play an active role in the work of salvation.

The Holy Spirit gives the Christian - whose life would otherwise risk being subject only to force, to rules and even to external conformism - docility, freedom and fidelity: indeed, he is the "Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord" (Is 11:2). Without him, how could we understand that Christ's yoke is easy and his burden light (cf. Mt 11:30)?

The Holy Spirit makes us bold and urges us to contemplate God's glory in our daily life and work. It spurs us to experience the mystery of Christ, to make the Word resound in our whole life, in the certainty that he will always have something new to say; he helps us to be ever committed despite our fear of failure, to face dangers and overcome the barriers that separate cultures in order to proclaim the Gospel, to work tirelessly for the continuous renewal of the Church without setting ourselves up as judges of our brothers and sisters.

Gift of the Holy Spirit is at the root of every vocation

6. In writing to the Christians of Corinth, Paul insists on the basic unity of God's Church, which is comparable to the organic unity of the human body in the diversity of its members.

Dear young people, today, every time you gather especially for a Eucharistic celebration, you are having a valuable experience of the Church's unity in the richness of her diversity. It is the Spirit who brings human beings to understand and accept one another, to recognize that they are children of God and brothers and sisters on their way towards the same goal, eternal life, and to speak the same language over and above divisions of culture or race.

By participating actively and generously in the life of the parishes, movements and associations, you are experiencing how the charisms of the Spirit help you to encounter Christ, to increase your familiarity with him and to achieve and enjoy ecclesial communion.

To speak of unity leads one to recall with sorrow the current state of separation between Christians. This is why ecumenism is one of the Christian community's most urgent priorities: "In these last years of the millennium, the Church should invoke the Holy Spirit with ever greater insistence, imploring from him the grace of Christian unity.... We are all however aware that the attainment of this goal cannot be the fruit of human efforts alone, vital though they are. Unity, after all, is a gift of the Holy Spirit.... The approaching end of the second millennium demands of everyone an examination of conscience and the promotion of fitting ecumenical initiatives" (Tertio millennio adveniente, n. 34). Dear young people, I also entrust this concern and this hope to you, as a commitment and a task.

Again, it is the Spirit who inspires the Church's evangelizing mission. Before his Ascension, Jesus said to the Apostles: "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Since then, under the impetus of the Spirit, Jesus' disciples have continued to be present on the paths of the world to proclaim the saving word to all men. Amid successes and failures, amid greatness and misery, with the power of the Spirit who acts in human weakness, the Church discovers the full breadth and responsibility of her universal mission.

In order to carry it out, she also calls on you, on your generosity and docility to God's Spirit.

7. The gift of the Spirit makes God's ancient commandment to his people timely and possible: "You shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy" (Lv 19:2) To become holy seems a difficult goal, reserved for people who are quite exceptional, or suited to those who wish to remain apart from the life and culture of their own time. Instead, to become holy is a gift and a task, rooted in Baptism and Confirmation and entrusted to everyone in the Church in every age. It is a gift and a duty of lay people as well as religious and sacred

ministers, in the private realm as in public affairs, in the life of individuals as in that of families and communities.

However within this common vocation that calls everyone to be conformed not to this world but to God's will (cf. Rom 12:2), there are different states of life and numerous vocations and missions.

The gift of the Spirit is the basis of everyone's vocation. It is at the root of the consecrated ministries of the Bishop, priest and deacon, who are at the service of ecclesial life. It is also he who forms and moulds the soul of those who are called to a life of special consecration, configuring them to Christ, chaste, poor and obedient. In the Spirit himself, who through the sacrament of Marriage surrounds and consecrates the union of the spouses, the mission of parents, called to make the family the first and fundamental expression of the Church, finds its strength and support. Lastly, the many other services oriented to building up and giving life to the community are nourished by the gift of the Spirit - Christian education and catechesis, care of the sick and the poor, human advancement and the exercise of charity. In fact, "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (1 Cor 12:7).

Familiarity with Jesus leads us to act as he did

8. It is therefore indispensable for each one to seek and to recognize day after day the long path on which the Lord is leading him to his personal encounter with him. Dear friends, question yourselves seriously about your vocation and be ready to answer the Lord who is calling you to take the place he has prepared for you from eternity.

Experience teaches that in this work of discernment the figure of the spiritual director is of great help: choose a competent person recommended by the Church, who will listen to you and guide you on the path of life, who will be close to you in difficult choices and in moments of joy. Your spiritual director will help you discern the inspirations of the Holy Spirit and progress on a path of freedom: freedom to be won by spiritual combat (cf. Eph 6: 13-17), which should be lived with constancy and perseverance.

Education in Christian life is not limited to encouraging the individual's spiritual growth, even if initiation into a solid, regular life of prayer remains the principle and foundation of the building. Familiarity with the Lord, when it is genuine, necessarily leads us to think, choose and act as Christ thought, chose and acted, putting ourselves at his disposal in order to continue his saving work.

A "spiritual life", which puts us in contact with God's love and reproduces the image of Jesus in the Christian, can remedy one of our century's ills, the overdevelopment of technical rationality and the underdevelopment of attention to man, his expectations and his mystery. There is an urgent need to rebuild an inner universe which is inspired and sustained by the Spirit, nourished by prayer and geared to action, so that it is strong enough to resist the many situations in which we should remain faithful to a project rather than follow or conform to the current mentality.

9. Mary, unlike the disciples, did not wait for the Resurrection to live, pray and act in the fullness of the Spirit. The Magnificat expresses the full prayer, the full missionary zeal, the full joy of the Church of Easter and Pentecost (cf. Lk 1:46-55).

When, taking the logic of his love to its final conclusion, God took Mary up to heaven in body and soul, the ultimate mystery was fulfilled: she, whom Jesus crucified had given as mother to the disciple he loved (cf. Jn 19:26-27), henceforth lives her motherly presence in the heart of the Church beside each one of her Son's disciples and participates uniquely in Christ's eternal intercession for the world's salvation.

To her, the Spouse of the Spirit, I entrust the preparation and celebration of the 13th World Youth Day, which you will spend this year in your local Churches, gathered round your Pastors.

I address her, the Mother of the Church, together with you, in the words of St Ildefonsus of Toledo:

"I pray you, I pray you, O Blessed Virgin,  
that I may receive Jesus from that Spirit  
from whom you yourself begot Jesus.

May my soul receive Jesus through the power of  
that Spirit through whom your flesh conceived  
Jesus himself.  
May I love Jesus in that same Spirit  
in whom you adore him as Lord  
and contemplate him as Son".

I cordially bless you all.

From the Vatican, 30 November 1997, the First Sunday of Advent.

# 1998

**April 5, 1998**

HOMILY for 13th WYD, Rome

5 April 1998,  
Palm Sunday

1. "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Lk 19:38).

Palm Sunday enables us to relive Jesus' entry into Jerusalem shortly before Passover. The Gospel passage presents him to us entering the city surrounded by a festive crowd. We can say that, on that day, Israel's expectations of the Messiah reached their peak. They were expectations fostered by the words of the ancient prophets and confirmed by Jesus of Nazareth through his teaching and, especially, through the signs he performed.

When the Pharisees asked him to silence the crowd, Jesus replied: "If these were silent, the very stones would cry out" (Lk 19:40). He was particularly referring to the walls of the temple in Jerusalem, built for the Messiah's coming and very carefully rebuilt after being destroyed at the time of the deportation to Babylon. Israel had a conscious and vivid memory of the destruction and rebuilding of the temple, and Jesus referred to this awareness when he said: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (Jn 2:19). As the ancient temple of Jerusalem was destroyed and rebuilt, so the new and perfect temple of Jesus' body was to die on the Cross and rise again on the third day (cf. *ibid.*, 2:21-22).

2. However, as he enters Jerusalem, Jesus knows that the rejoicing by some in the crowd is leading him into the heart of the "mysterium" of salvation. He is aware that he is going to his death and will not receive a royal crown, but one of thorns.

The readings for today's celebration are marked by the Messiah's suffering and culminate in the Evangelist Luke's description of it in the Passion account. This unspeakable mystery of pain and love is presented by the prophet Isaiah, considered in a way as the evangelist of the Old Testament, as well as by the responsorial psalm and the refrain sung a few moments ago: "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?". St Paul takes it up again in the Letter to the Philippians, which is the inspiration for the antiphon that will accompany us during the "Triduum Sacrum": "Christ became obedient for us unto death, even death on a cross" (cf. 2:8). At the Easter Vigil we will add: "Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name" (Phil 2:9).

Every day during the Eucharistic celebration the Church recalls the Lord's Passion, Death and Resurrection — the faithful say after the consecration: "Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again".

3. For over 10 years Palm Sunday has become an eagerly awaited gathering for the celebration of World Youth Day. The fact that the Church pays special attention to young people on this particular day is in itself very significant. This is not only because 2,000 years ago young people — *pueri Hebraeorum* — festively accompanied Christ during his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, but especially because, after 20 centuries of Christian history, young people, led by their perceptiveness and a correct insight, are discovering in the liturgy of Palm Sunday a message uniquely addressed to the them.

Dear young people, today the message of the Cross is offered to you again. You, who will be the adults of the third millennium, are entrusted with this Cross which in a few minutes will be passed from a group of French youths to young people representing Rome and Italy. From Rome to Buenos Aires; from Buenos Aires to Santiago de Compostela; from Santiago de Compostela to Czéstochowa; from Jasna Góra to Denver; from Denver to Manila; from Manila to Paris, this Cross has been on pilgrimage with young people from one country to another, from one continent to another. Your choice, young Christians, is clear: to discover in the Cross of Christ the meaning of your life and the source of your missionary enthusiasm.

Starting today, this Cross will go on pilgrimage in the Dioceses of Italy until the World Youth Day of the Year 2000, which will be celebrated here in Rome during the Great Jubilee. Then, with the arrival of the new millennium, it will continue its travels around the world, thus showing that the Cross journeys with young people and young people journey with the Cross.

4. How can we not give thanks to Christ for the exceptional way that young believers have joined forces? At this time I would like to thank all those who have guided young people in this providential activity and have contributed to the great pilgrimage of the Cross along the paths of the world. I am especially thinking, with affection and gratitude, of Cardinal Eduardo Pironio, who died recently. He was present at and presided over many celebrations of World Youth Day. May the Lord shower upon him the heavenly rewards promised to good and faithful servants!

In a few minutes, as the Cross is being symbolically passed from Paris to Rome, allow the Bishop of this city to exclaim with the liturgy: Ave Crux, spes unica! We hail you, O holy Cross! You bring us the One who 20 centuries ago was acclaimed in Jerusalem by other young people and by the crowd: "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord".

We all join in this song, repeating: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!

Yes! Blessed are you, O Christ, who also comes to us today with your message of love and life. And blessed is your holy Cross, from which flows the salvation of the world yesterday, today and forever.

Ave Crux! Praised be Jesus Christ.

**May 30, 1998**

**STUDENTS HAVE THE RIGHT TO LEARN THE CHURCH'S TEACHING IN ALL ITS RICHNESS**

'Ad limina Apostolorum': Bishops of the United States - 7  
Pope John Paul II

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"Young Catholics have a right to hear the full content of [the Gospel] message in order to come to know Christ.... Efforts to renew catechesis must be based on the premise that Christ's teaching, as transmitted in the Church and as authentically interpreted by the Magisterium, has to be presented in all its richness, and the methodologies used have to respond to the nature of the faith as truth received", the Holy Father said on Saturday, 30 May, to the sixth group of U.S. Bishops to make their ad limina visit to Rome. The Pope also told the Pastors from the states of Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin that a university's Catholic identity "comes from its living within the Church today and always, speaking from the heart of the Church (ex corde Ecclesiae) to the contemporary world". This identity "should be evident in its curriculum, in its faculty, in student activities and in the quality of its community life". Here is the text of the Holy Father's address, which was given in English.

Dear Cardinal George,

Dear Brother Bishops,

1. In the course of this series of ad limina visits, the Bishops of the United States have again borne witness to the keen sense of communion of American Catholics with the Successor of Peter. From the beginning of my Pontificate I have experienced this closeness, and the spiritual and material support of so many of your

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people. In welcoming you, the Bishops of the ecclesiastical regions of Chicago, Indianapolis and Milwaukee, I express once more to you and to the whole Church in your country my heartfelt gratitude: 'God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the Gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you always in my prayers' (Rom 1:9). Continuing the reflection begun with previous groups of Bishops on the renewal of ecclesial life in the light of the Second Vatican Council and in view of the challenge of evangelization which we face on the eve of the next millennium, today I wish to address some aspects of your responsibility for Catholic education.

Clear vision of Church's educational mission

2. From the earliest days of the American Republic, when Archbishop John Carroll encouraged the teaching vocation of St Elizabeth Ann Seton and founded the new nation's first Catholic college, the Church in the United States has been deeply involved in education at every level. For more than 200 years, Catholic elementary schools, high schools, colleges and universities have been instrumental in educating successive generations of Catholics, and in teaching the truths of the faith, promoting respect for the human person, and developing the moral character of their students. Their academic excellence and success in preparing young people for life have served the whole of American society.

As we approach the third Christian millennium, the Second Vatican Council's call for generous dedication to the whole enterprise of Catholic education remains to be more fully implemented (cf. *Gravissimum educationis*, n. 1). Few areas of Catholic life in the United States need the leadership of the Bishops for their reaffirmation and renewal as much as this one does. Any such renewal requires a clear vision of the Church's educational mission, which in turn cannot be separated from the Lord's mandate to preach the Gospel to all nations. Like other educational institutions, Catholic schools transmit knowledge and promote the human development of their students. However, as the Council emphasized, the Catholic school does something else: "It aims to create for the school community an atmosphere enlivened by the Gospel spirit of freedom and charity. It aims to help the young person in such a way that the development of his or her own personality will be matched by the growth of that new creation which he or she has become by Baptism. It strives to relate all human culture eventually to the news of salvation, so that the light of faith will illumine the knowledge which students gradually gain of the world, of life, and of the human family" (*ibid.*, n. 8). The mission of the Catholic school is the integral formation of students, so that they may be true to their condition as Christ's disciples and as such work effectively for the evangelization of culture and for the common good of society.

3. Catholic education aims not only to communicate facts but also to transmit a coherent, comprehensive vision of life, in the conviction that the truths contained in that vision liberate students in the most profound meaning of human freedom. In its recent document *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, the Congregation for Catholic Education drew attention to the importance of communicating knowledge in the context of the Christian vision of the world, of life, of culture and of history: "In the Catholic school there is no separation between time for learning and time for formation, between acquiring notions and growing in wisdom. The various school subjects do not present only knowledge to be attained but also values to be acquired and truths to be discovered" (n. 14).

The greatest challenge to Catholic education in the United States today, and the greatest contribution that authentically Catholic education can make to American culture, is to restore to that culture the conviction that human beings can grasp the truth of things, and in grasping that truth can know their duties to God, to themselves and their neighbours. In meeting that challenge, the Catholic educator will hear an echo of Christ's words: "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (Jn 8:32). The contemporary world urgently needs the service of educational institutions which uphold and teach that truth is "that fundamental value without which freedom, justice and human dignity are extinguished" (*Veritatis splendor*, n. 4).

To educate in the truth, and for genuine freedom and evangelical love, is at the very heart of the Church's mission. In a cultural climate in which moral norms are often thought to be matters of personal preference, Catholic schools have a crucial role to play in leading the younger generation to realize that freedom consists above all in being able to respond to the demands of the truth (cf. *Veritatis splendor*, n. 84). The respect which Catholic elementary and secondary schools enjoy suggests that their commitment to transmitting moral wisdom is meeting a widely-felt cultural need in your country. The example of Bishops

and pastors who, with the support of Catholic parents, have persevered in leadership in this field should encourage everyone's efforts to foster new dedication and new growth. The fact that some Dioceses are involved in a programme of school building is a significant sign of vitality and a great hope for the future.

Witness of adults is vital part of school's identity

4. Almost 25 years have passed since your Conference issued *To Teach as Jesus Did*, a document which is still very relevant today. It emphasized the importance of another aspect of Catholic education: More than any other programme of education sponsored by the Church, the Catholic school has the opportunity and obligation to be ... oriented to Christian service because it helps students acquire skills, virtues and habits of heart and mind required for effective service to others" (n. 106). On the basis of what they see and hear, students should become ever more aware of the dignity of every human person and gradually absorb the key elements of the Church's social doctrine and her concern for the poor. Catholic institutions should continue their tradition of commitment to the education of the poor in spite of the financial burdens involved. In some cases it may be necessary to find ways to share the burden more evenly, so that parishes with schools are not left to shoulder it alone.

A Catholic school is a place where students live a shared experience of faith in God and where they learn the riches of Catholic culture. Taking proper account of the stages of human development, the freedom of individuals, and the rights of parents in the education of their children, Catholic schools must help students to deepen their personal relationship with God and to discover that all things human have their deepest meaning in the person and teaching of Jesus Christ. Prayer and the liturgy, especially the sacraments of the Eucharist and Penance, should mark the rhythm of a Catholic school's life. Transmitting knowledge about the faith, though essential, is not sufficient. If students in Catholic schools are to gain a genuine experience of the Church, the example of teachers and others responsible for their formation is crucial: the witness of adults in the school community is a vital part of the school's identity.

Numberless religious and lay teachers and other personnel in Catholic schools down the years have shown how their professional competence and commitment are grounded in the spiritual, intellectual and moral values of the Catholic tradition. The Catholic community in the United States and the whole country have been immeasurably blessed through the work of so many dedicated religious in schools in every part of your country. I also know how much you value the dedication of the many lay men and women who, sometimes at great financial sacrifice, are involved in Catholic education because they believe in the mission of Catholic schools. If in some cases there has been an eroding of confidence in the teaching vocation, you must do all you can to restore that trust.

5. Catechesis, either in schools or in parish-based programmes, plays a fundamental role in transmitting the faith. The Bishop should encourage catechists to see their work as a vocation: as a privileged sharing in the mission of handing on the faith and accounting for the hope that is in us (cf. 1 Pt 3:15). The Gospel message is the definitive response to the deepest longings of the human heart. Young Catholics have a right to hear the full content of that message in order to come to know Christ, the One who has overcome death and opened the way to salvation. Efforts to renew catechesis must be based on the premise that Christ's teaching, as transmitted in the Church and as authentically interpreted by the Magisterium, has to be presented in all its richness, and the methodologies used have to respond to the nature of the faith as truth received (cf. 1 Cor 15:1). The work you have begun through your Conference to evaluate catechetical texts by the standard of the Catechism of the Catholic Church will help to ensure the unity and completeness of the faith as it is presented in your Dioceses.

Theology must be done in and for the Church

6. The Church's tradition of involvement in universities, which goes back almost a thousand years, quickly took root in the United States. Today Catholic colleges and universities can make an important contribution to the renewal of American higher education. To belong to a university community, as was my privilege during my days as a professor, is to stand at the crossroads of the cultures that have formed the modern world. It is to be a trustee of the wisdom of centuries and a promoter of the creativity that will transmit that wisdom to future generations. At a time when knowledge is often thought to be fragmentary and never absolute, Catholic universities should be expected to uphold the objectivity and coherence of knowledge.

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Now that the centuries-old conflict between science and faith is fading, Catholic universities should be in the forefront of a new and long-overdue dialogue between the empirical sciences and the truths of faith.

If Catholic universities are to become leaders in the renewal of higher education, they must first have a strong sense of their own Catholic identity. This identity is not established once and for all by an institution's origins, but comes from its living within the Church today and always, speaking from the heart of the Church (*ex corde Ecclesiae*) to the contemporary world. The Catholic identity of a university should be evident in its curriculum, in its faculty, in student activities and in the quality of its community life. This is no infringement upon the university's nature as a true centre of learning, where the truth of the created order is fully respected, but also ultimately illuminated by the light of the new creation in Christ.

The Catholic identity of a university necessarily includes the university's relationship to the local Church and its Bishop. It is sometimes said that a university that acknowledges a responsibility to any community or authority outside the relevant academic professional associations has lost both its independence and its integrity. But this is to detach freedom from its object, which is truth. Catholic universities understand that there is no contradiction between the free and vigorous pursuit of the truth and a "recognition of and an adherence to the teaching authority of the Church in matters of faith and morals" (*Ex corde Ecclesiae*, n. 27).

7. In safeguarding the Catholic identity of Catholic institutions of higher education, Bishops have a special responsibility in relation to the work of theologians. If, as the whole Catholic tradition testifies, theology is to be done in and for the Church, then the question of theology's relationship to the teaching authority of the Church is not extrinsic - something imposed from outside -- but rather intrinsic to theology as an ecclesial science. Theology itself is accountable to those to whom Christ has given responsibility for overseeing the ecclesial community and its stability in the truth. As the discussion on these questions deepens in your country, it must be the Bishops' aim to see that the terms used are genuinely ecclesial in character.

In addition, Bishops should take a personal interest in the work of university chaplaincies, not only in Catholic institutions but also in other colleges and universities where Catholic students are present. Campus ministry offers a notable opportunity to be close to young people at a significant time in their lives: "..., the university chapel is called to be a vital centre for promoting the Christian renewal of culture, in respectful and frank dialogue, in a clear and well-grounded perspective (cf. 1 Pt 3:15), in a witness which is open to questioning and capable of convincing" (Address to the European Congress of University Chaplains, 1 May 1998, n. 4). Young adults need the service of committed chaplains who can help them, intellectually and spiritually, to attain their full maturity in Christ.

8. Dear Brother Bishops: on the threshold of a new century and a new millennium, the Church continues to proclaim the capacity of human beings to know the truth and to grow into genuine freedom through their acceptance of that truth. In this respect, the Church is the defender of the moral insight on which your country was founded. Your Catholic schools are widely recognized as models for the renewal of American elementary and secondary education. Your Catholic colleges and universities can be leaders in the renewal of American higher education. At a time when the relationship between freedom and moral truth is being debated on a host of issues at every level of society and government, Catholic scholars have the resources to contribute to an intellectual and moral renewal of American culture. As you work to strengthen Catholic education, and as you promote Catholic intellectual life in all its dimensions, may you enjoy the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Seat of Wisdom. On the eve of the feast of Pentecost, I join you in invoking the gifts of the Holy Spirit upon the Church in the United States. With affection in the Lord, I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing to you and to the priests, religious and laity of your Dioceses.

**October 9, 1998**

Ad Limina Address of the Pope to the Bishops of the Church in Washington, Oregon, Montana, Idaho and Alaska, Oct. 9, 1998:

Dear Brother Bishops,

1. With fraternal love in the Lord I welcome you, the Pastors of the Church in the Northwestern United States, on the occasion of your ad Limina visit. This series of visits by the Bishops of your country to the

tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul, and to the Successor of Peter and his collaborators in the service of the universal Church, is taking place while the whole People of God is preparing to celebrate the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 and enter a new Christian Millennium.

The two thousandth anniversary of the Birth of the Savior is a call to all Christ's followers to seek a genuine conversion to God and a great advance in holiness. Since the liturgy is such a central part of the Christian life, I wish today to consider some aspects of the liturgical renewal so vigorously promoted by the Second Vatican Council as the prime agent of the wider renewal of Catholic life.

2. To look back over what has been done in the field of liturgical renewal in the years since the Council is, first, to see many reasons for giving heartfelt thanks and praise to the Most Holy Trinity for the marvelous awareness which has developed among the faithful of their role and responsibility in this priestly work of Christ and his Church.

It is also to realize that not all changes have always and everywhere been accompanied by the necessary explanation and catechesis; as a result, in some cases there has been a misunderstanding of the very nature of the liturgy, leading to abuses, polarization, and sometimes even grave scandal.

After the experience of more than thirty years of liturgical renewal, we are well placed to assess both the strengths and weaknesses of what has been done, in order more confidently to plot our course into the future which God has in mind for his cherished People.

3. The challenge now is to move beyond whatever misunderstandings there have been and to reach the proper point of balance, especially by entering more deeply into the contemplative dimension of worship, which includes the sense of awe, reverence and adoration which are fundamental attitudes in our relationship with God.

This will happen only if we recognize that the liturgy has dimensions both local and universal, time-bound and eternal, horizontal and vertical, subjective and objective. It is precisely these tensions which give to Catholic worship its distinctive character.

The universal Church is united in the one great act of praise; but it is always the worship of a particular community in a particular culture. It is the eternal worship of Heaven, but it is also steeped in time. It gathers and builds a human community, but it is also "the worship of the divine majesty" (Sacrosanctum Concilium, 33).

It is subjective in that it depends radically upon what the worshippers bring to it; but it is objective in that it transcends them as the priestly act of Christ himself, to which he associates us but which ultimately does not depend upon us (*ibid.*, 7).

This is why it is so important that liturgical law be respected. The priest, who is the servant of the liturgy, not its inventor or producer, has a particular responsibility in this regard, lest he empty liturgy of its true meaning or obscure its sacred character.

The core of the mystery of Christian worship is the sacrifice of Christ offered to the Father and the work of the Risen Christ who sanctifies his People through the liturgical signs. It is therefore essential that in seeking to enter more deeply into the contemplative depths of worship the inexhaustible mystery of the priesthood of Jesus Christ be fully acknowledged and respected.

While all the baptized share in that one priesthood of Christ, not all share in it in the same manner. The ministerial priesthood, rooted in Apostolic Succession, confers on the ordained priest faculties and responsibility at the service of the common priesthood and are directed at the unfolding of the baptismal grace of all Christians (cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 1547). The priest therefore is not just one who presides, but one who acts in the person of Christ.

4. Only by being radically faithful to this doctrinal foundation can we avoid one-dimensional and unilateral interpretations of the Council's teaching. The sharing of all the baptized in the one priesthood



of Jesus Christ is the key to understanding the Council's call for "full, conscious and active participation" in the liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium, 14).

Full participation certainly means that every member of the community has a part to play in the liturgy; and in this respect a great deal has been achieved in parishes and communities across your land. But full participation does not mean that everyone does everything, since this would lead to a clericalizing of the laity and a laicizing of the priesthood; and this was not what the Council had in mind.

The liturgy, like the Church, is intended to be hierarchical and polyphonic, respecting the different roles assigned by Christ and allowing all the different voices to blend in one great hymn of praise.

Active participation certainly means that, in gesture, word, song and service, all the members of the community take part in an act of worship, which is anything but inert or passive. Yet active participation does not preclude the active passivity of silence, stillness and listening: indeed, it demands it.

Worshippers are not passive, for instance, when listening to the readings or the homily, or following the prayers of the celebrant, and the chants and music of the liturgy. These are experiences of silence and stillness, but they are in their own way profoundly active. In a culture which neither favors nor fosters meditative quiet, the art of interior listening is learned only with difficulty. Here we see how the liturgy, though it must always be properly inculturated, must also be counter-cultural.

Conscious participation calls for the entire community to be properly instructed in the mysteries of the liturgy, lest the experience of worship degenerate into a form of ritualism.

But it does not mean a constant attempt within the liturgy itself to make the implicit explicit, since this often leads to a verbosity and informality which are alien to the Roman Rite and end by trivializing the act of worship.

Nor does it mean the suppression of all subconscious experience, which is vital in a liturgy which thrives on symbols that speak to the subconscious just as they speak to the conscious. The use of the vernacular has certainly opened up the treasures of the liturgy to all who take part, but this does not mean that the Latin language, and especially the chants which are so superbly adapted to the genius of the Roman Rite, should be wholly abandoned.

If subconscious experience is ignored in worship, an affective and devotional vacuum is created and the liturgy can become not only too verbal but also too cerebral. Yet the Roman Rite is again distinctive in the balance it strikes between a spareness and a richness of emotion: it feeds the heart and the mind, the body and the soul.

It has been written with good reason that in the history of the Church all true renewal has been linked to a re-reading of the Church Fathers. And what is true in general is true of the liturgy in particular. The Fathers were pastors with a burning zeal for the task of spreading the Gospel; and therefore they were profoundly interested in all the dimensions of worship, leaving us some of the most significant and enduring texts of the Christian tradition, which are anything but the result of a barren aestheticism.

The Fathers were ardent preachers, and it is hard to imagine that there can be an effective renewal of Catholic preaching, as the Council wished, without sufficient familiarity with the Patristic tradition.

The Council promoted a move to a homiletic mode of preaching which would, like the Fathers, expound the biblical text in a way which opens its inexhaustible riches to the faithful.

The importance that preaching has assumed in Catholic worship since the Council means that priests and deacons should be trained to make good use of the Bible. But this also involves familiarity with the whole Patristic, theological and moral tradition, as well as a penetrating knowledge of their communities and of society in general. Otherwise the impression is given of a teaching without roots and without the universal application inherent in the Gospel message. The excellent synthesis of the Church's doctrinal wealth contained in the Catechism of the Catholic Church has yet to be more widely felt as an influence on Catholic preaching.

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5. It is essential to keep clearly in mind that the liturgy is intimately linked to the Church's mission to evangelize. If the two do not go hand in hand, both will falter.

Insofar as developments in liturgical renewal are superficial or unbalanced, our energies for a new evangelization will be compromised; and insofar as our vision falls short of the new evangelization our liturgical renewal will be reduced to external and possibly unsound adaptation.

The Roman Rite has always been a form of worship that looks to mission. This is why it is comparatively brief: there was much to be done outside the church; and this is why we have the dismissal "Ite, missa est", which gives us the term "Mass": the community is sent forth to evangelize the world in obedience to Christ's command (cf. Mt 28:19-20).

As Pastors, you are fully aware of the great thirst for God and the desire for prayer which people feel today. The World Youth Day in Denver stands out as evidence that the younger generation of Americans too yearns for a deep and demanding faith in Jesus Christ.

They want to have an active role in the Church, and to be sent out in the name of Christ to evangelize and transform the world around them. Young people are ready to commit themselves to the Gospel message if it is presented in all its nobility and liberating force.

They will continue to take an active part in the liturgy if they experience it as capable of leading them to a deep personal relationship with God; and it is from this experience that there will come priestly and religious vocations marked by true evangelical and missionary energy.

In this sense the young are summoning the whole Church to take the next step in implementing the vision of worship which the Council has bequeathed to us. Unburdened by the ideological agenda of an earlier time, they are able to speak simply and directly of their desire to experience God, especially in prayer both public and private. In listening to them, dear Brothers, we may well hear "what the Spirit is saying to the Churches" (Rev 2:11).

6. In our preparation for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, the year 1999 will be devoted to the Person of the Father and to the celebration of his merciful love. Initiatives for next year should draw particular attention to the nature of the Christian life as "a great pilgrimage to the house of the Father, whose unconditional love for every human creature, and in particular for the 'prodigal son', we discover anew each day" (Tertio Millennio Adveniente, 49).

At the core of this experience of pilgrimage is our journey as sinners into the unfathomable depths of the Church's liturgy, the liturgy of Creation, the liturgy of Heaven all of which are in the end the worship of Jesus Christ, the Eternal Priest, in whom the Church and all creation are drawn into the life of the Most Holy Trinity, our true home. That is the purpose of all our worship and all our evangelizing.

7. At the very heart of the worshipping community, we find the Mother of Christ and Mother of the Church, who, from the depths of her contemplative faith, brings forth the Good News, which is Jesus Christ himself. Together with you I pray that American Catholics when they celebrate the liturgy will have in their hearts the same song that she sang: "My being proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit finds joy in God my Savior. . . God who is mighty has done great things for me, holy is his name" (Lk 1:46-50).

In entrusting the priests, religious and lay faithful of your Dioceses to the Blessed Mother's loving protection, I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing.

Pope John Paul II

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# 1999

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January 6, 1999

MESSAGE FOR 14TH WORLD YOUTH DAY

Pope John Paul II

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God the Father loves you  
 "The Father loves you" (cf. Jn 16:27)

Dear Young Friends!

1. In the perspective of the Jubilee which is now drawing near, 1999 is aimed at "broadening the horizons of believers, so that they will see things in the perspective of Christ: in the perspective of the 'Father who is in heaven' from whom the Lord was sent and to whom he has returned" (*Tertio millennio adveniente*, n. 49). It is, indeed, not possible to celebrate Christ and his jubilee without turning, with him, towards God, his Father and our Father (cf. Jn 20:17). The Holy Spirit also takes us back to the Father and to Jesus. If the Spirit teaches us to say: "Jesus is Lord" (cf. 1 Cor 12:3), it is to make us capable of speaking with God, calling him "Abba! Father!" (cf. Gal 4:6).

I invite you also, together with the whole Church, to turn towards God the Father and to listen with gratitude and wonder to the amazing revelation of Jesus: "The Father loves you!" (cf. Jn 16:27). These are the words I entrust to you as the theme of the 14th World Youth Day. Dear young people, receive the love that God first gives you (cf. 1 Jn 4:19). Hold fast to this certainty, the only one that can give meaning, strength and joy to life: his love will never leave you, his covenant of peace will never be removed from you (cf. Is 54:10). He has stamped your name on the palms of his hands (cf. Is 49:16).

2. It may not always be conscious and clear, but in the human heart there is a deep nostalgia for God. St Ignatius of Antioch expressed this eloquently: "There is in me a living water that murmurs within me: 'Come to the Father'" (*Ad Rom.*, 7). "Lord, show me your glory", Moses begged on the mountain (*Ex 33:18*).

"No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known" (Jn 1:18). So, is it enough to know the Son in order to know the Father? Philip does not let himself be so easily convinced. "Show us the Father", he asks. His insistence brings us a reply beyond all that we could hope for: "Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father" (Jn 14:9).

After the Incarnation, there exists a human face in which it is possible to see God: "Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me" (Jn 14:11). Jesus says this not only to Philip, but to all who will believe. And so, whoever receives the Son of God receives the One who sent him (cf. Jn 13:20). On the contrary, "he who hates me hates my Father also" (Jn 15:23). So a new relationship is possible between the Creator and the creature, that of the son with his own Father. When the disciples want to enter into the secrets of God and ask to learn how to pray as support for their journey, Jesus, in reply, teaches them the Our Father, "synthesis of the whole Gospel" (*Tertullian, De oratione*, 1). Here there is confirmation of our state as sons and daughters (cf. Lk 11:1-4). "On the one hand, in the words of this prayer the only Son gives us the words the Father gave him: he is the master of our prayer. On the other, as Word incarnate, he knows in his human heart the needs of his human brothers and sisters and reveals them to us: he is the model of our prayer" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 2765).

Bringing us the direct witness of the life of the Son of God, John's Gospel points out the road to follow in order to know the Father. Calling upon the "Father" is the secret, the breath, the life of Jesus. Is he not the only Son, the firstborn, the loved one towards whom everything is directed, present to the Father even before the world existed, sharing in his same glory? (cf. Jn 17:5). From the Father Jesus receives power over all things (cf. Jn 17:2), the message to be proclaimed (cf. Jn 12:49), the work to be accomplished (cf. Jn 14:31). The disciples themselves do not belong to him: it is the Father who has given them to him (cf. Jn 17:9), entrusting him with the task of keeping them from evil, so that none should be lost (cf. Jn 18:9).

In the hour of his passing from this world to the Father, the "priestly prayer" reveals the mind of the Son: "Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory which I had with you before the world was made" (Jn 17:5). As Supreme and Eternal Priest, Christ takes his place at the head of the immense procession of

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the redeemed. First-born of a multitude of brothers, he leads back to the one fold the sheep of the scattered flock, so that there may be "one flock and one shepherd" (Jn 10:16).

Thanks to his work, the same loving relationship that exists within the Trinity was brought into the relation between the Father and redeemed humanity: "The Father loves you!". How could this mystery of love be understood without the action of the Spirit poured out from the Father over the disciples thanks to the prayer of Jesus (cf. Jn 14:16)? The Incarnation in time of the eternal Word and the birth for eternity of all who are incorporated in him through Baptism would be inconceivable without the life-giving action of the same Spirit.

3. "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (Jn 3:16). The world is loved by God! And, in spite of the refusals of which it is capable, it will continue to be loved to the very end. "The Father loves you" always and for ever: this is the unheard-of novelty, "the very simple yet profound proclamation owed to humanity by the Church" (cf. *Christifideles laici*, n. 34). Even if the Son had given us only this word, it would be enough. "See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are" (1 Jn 3: 1). We are not orphans; love is possible. Because - as you know - we are not capable of loving if we are not loved.

But how are we to proclaim this good news? Jesus points out the way to follow: listen to the Father in order to be "taught by God" (Jn 6:45) and keep the commandments (cf. Jn 14:23). This knowledge of the Father will then grow: "I made known to them your name, and I will make it known" (Jn 17:26); and this will be the work of the Holy Spirit, guiding into "all truth" (cf. Jn 16:13).

In our time, the Church and the world have greater need than ever of "missionaries" capable of proclaiming by word and example this fundamental and consoling certainty. Being aware of this, young people of today and adults of the new millennium, let yourselves be "formed" in the school of Jesus. In the Church and in the various environments of your daily existence, become credible witnesses to the Father's love! Make it visible in your choices and attitudes, in your way of accepting people and placing yourselves at their service, in faithfully respecting God's will and his Commandments.

"The Father loves you". These wonderful words are uttered within the heart of the believer who, like the disciple beloved of Jesus, rests his head on Jesus' breast and hears what is spoken in confidence: "He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him" (Jn 14:31) for "this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (Jn 17:3).

There is a reflection of the Father's love in the various forms of fatherhood encountered along your way. I am thinking especially of your parents, who cooperate with God in giving you life and in caring for you: honour them (cf. Ex 20:12) and be grateful to them! I am thinking of the priests and other persons consecrated to the Lord, who for you are friends, witnesses and teachers of life, "for your progress and joy in the faith" (Phil 1:25). I am thinking of the authentic educators who, with their humanity, their wisdom and their faith make a significant contribution to your growth, your Christian and therefore fully human growth. For each one of these worthy persons who walk beside you along the paths of life, give thanks always to the Lord,

4. The Father loves you! Awareness of God's special love cannot fail to encourage believers "to undertake, by holding fast to Christ the Redeemer of man, a journey of authentic conversion.... This is the proper context for a renewed appreciation and more intense celebration of the sacrament of Penance in its most profound meaning" (*Tertio millennio adveniente*, n. 50).

"Sin is an abuse of the freedom that God gives to created persons so that they are capable of loving him and loving one another" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n. 387); it is refusal to live the life of God received in Baptism, to let ourselves be loved by the true Love: the human being has in fact the terrible power to be an obstacle to God in his desire to give all that is good. Sin, which has its origin in the person's free will (cf. Mk 7:20), is a failure in genuine love; it wounds the nature of the human person and injures human solidarity by attitudes, words and actions steeped in self-love (cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, nn. 1849-1850). It is in the innermost self that freedom opens up or closes itself to love. This is the constant drama of the human person, who often chooses slavery, subjecting himself or herself to fears, caprices,

wrong attitudes, creating idols that dominate and ideologies that degrade his or her humanity. In John's Gospel we read: "Everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin" (Jn 8:34).

Jesus says to everyone: "Repent and believe in the Gospel" (Mk 1:15). At the origin of every genuine conversion there is God looking upon the sinner. It is a look that becomes a search filled with love; a passion, even that of the Cross; a will to pardon that, showing the guilty one the esteem and love in which he or she is still held, in contrast to the disorder in which they are plunged, calls for the decision to change their way of life. This is the case of Levi (cf. Mk 2:13-17), of Zacchaeus (cf. Lk 19:1-10), of the woman taken in adultery (cf. Jn 8: 1 -11), of the thief (cf. Lk 23:39-43), of the Samaritan woman (cf. Jn 4:1-30): "Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it" (Redemptor hominis, n. 10). The human being who has discovered and experienced the God of mercy and pardon can live only in a state of being continually converted to God (cf. Dives in misericordia, n. 13).

"Go and do not sin again" (Jn 8:11): the pardon is given freely, but the person is invited to respond with a serious commitment to renewal of life. God knows his creatures too well! He is not unaware that an ever greater manifestation of his love will finally arouse in the sinner disgust for the sin. So God's love is acted out in a continual offer of pardon.

How eloquent is the parable of the prodigal son! From the moment the son leaves home, the father lives in a state of anxiety: he waits, hopes, scans the horizon. He respects the son's freedom, but he suffers. And when the son decides to return, the father sees him in the distance and goes to meet him, clasps him tightly in his arms and joyfully gives the order: "Put the ring on his finger - symbol of covenant - bring the best robe and put it on him - symbol of new life - put shoes on his feet - symbol of dignity regained - and let us make merry, for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found!" (cf. Lk 15:11-32).

5. Before ascending to the Father, Jesus entrusted to his Church the ministry of reconciliation (cf. Jn 20:23). So, a repentance that is only interior does not suffice in order to obtain God's pardon. Reconciliation with God is obtained through reconciliation with the ecclesial community. So, acknowledgement of sin is made through a concrete sacramental gesture: repentance and confession of the sins, with the intention of amendment, in the presence of the Church's minister.

Today, unfortunately, the more people lose the sense of sin the less they have recourse to the pardon of God. This is the cause of many of the problems and difficulties of our time. This year, I invite you to rediscover the beauty and the wealth of grace in the sacrament of Penance by carefully rereading the parable of the prodigal son, where what is stressed is not so much the sin as the tenderness of God and his mercy. Listening to the Word in an attitude of prayer, contemplation, wonder and certainty, say to God: "I need you; I count on you in order to exist and to live. You are stronger than my sin. I believe in your power over my life-, I believe that you are able to save me just as I am now. Remember me. Pardon me!".

Look at yourselves from "within". Before being against a law or a moral norm, sin is against God (cf. Ps 50 [51]: 6), against your brothers and sisters and against yourselves. Stand in front of Christ, only Son of the Father and model for all brothers and sisters. He alone shows us what we must be in relation to the Father, to our neighbour, to society, in order to be at peace with ourselves. He shows this through the Gospel, which is one with Jesus Christ. Faithfulness to one is the measure of faithfulness to the other.

Approach trustfully the sacrament of Confession: with the confession of sins you will show that you want to acknowledge infidelity and to put an end to it; you will admit the need for conversion and reconciliation, in order to find again the peace and fruitfulness of being children of God in Christ Jesus; you will express solidarity with the brothers and sisters who also undergo the trial of sin (cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, n. 1445).

Finally, receive with a grateful heart the absolution given by the priest. This is the moment when the Father pronounces over the repentant sinner the life-giving word: "This my son is alive again!". The Source of love regenerates and makes us capable of overcoming egoism and of loving again, with greater intensity.

6. "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets" (Mt 22:37-40). Jesus does not say that the second commandment is identical with the first, but that it is "like it". So the two commandments are not interchangeable, as if we could automatically satisfy the commandment to love God by observing the one to love our neighbour, or vice versa. Each has its own consistency, and they must both be observed. But Jesus puts them side by side to make it clear for everyone that they are closely connected. It is impossible to observe one without practising the other. "Their inseparable unity is attested to by Christ in his words and by his very life: his mission culminates in the Cross of our Redemption, the sign of his indivisible love for the Father and for humanity" (Veritatis splendor, n. 14).

To know whether we truly love God, we have to see whether we seriously love our neighbour. And if we want to test the quality of love for our neighbour, we have to ask ourselves whether we truly love God. Because "he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen" (1 Jn 4:20); and "by this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments" (1 Jn 5:2).

In the Apostolic Letter *Tertio millennio adveniente*, I exhorted Christians to "lay greater emphasis on the Church's preferential option for the poor and the outcast" (n. 51). This is a "preferential", not an exclusive option. Jesus invites us to love the poor, because they should be given special attention precisely because of their vulnerability. As is well known, they are more and more numerous, even in the so-called rich countries, in spite of the fact that the goods of this world are meant for everyone! Every situation of poverty is a challenge to each one's Christian charity. This charity, however, must also become a social and political commitment, because the problem of poverty in the world depends on concrete situations that must be changed by men and women of good will, builders of the civilization of love. They are "structures of sin" that cannot be overcome without cooperation- from everyone, in readiness to "lose oneself" for the sake of the other rather than exploiting him, to "serve" instead of oppressing him (cf. *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, n. 38).

Dear young people, I invite you especially to take concrete initiatives of solidarity and sharing alongside and with those who are poorest. Participate generously in one or another of the projects through which, in the different countries, others of your contemporaries are involved in gestures of fraternity and solidarity. This will be a way of "restoring" to the Lord in the persons of the poor at least something of all he has given to you who are more fortunate. It can also give immediate visible expression to a fundamental option: to give your life a definite orientation towards God and others.

Mary sums up in her person the whole mystery of the Church. She is "the highly favoured daughter of the Father" (*Tertio millennio adveniente*, n. 54), who freely accepted and readily responded to the gift of God. "Daughter" of the Father, she merited to become the Mother of his Son: "Let it be to me according to your word" (Lk 1:37). She is the Mother of God, because she is perfectly daughter of the Father.

In her heart there is no desire other than that of helping Christians in their commitment to live as children of God. As a most tender mother, she constantly leads them to Jesus, so that, following him, they may learn to develop their relation with the Father in heaven. As at the wedding in Cana, she invites them to do whatever he tells them (cf. Jn 2:5), for she knows that this is the way to reach the house of "the Father of mercies" (cf. 2 Cor 1:3).

The 14th World Youth Day which will be held this year in the local Churches, is the last before the great appointment of the Jubilee. It has therefore particular significance in the preparation for the Holy Year 2000. I pray that for each one of you it may be the occasion for a renewed encounter with the Lord of life and with his Church.

To Mary I entrust your journeying, and I ask her to make your hearts ready to receive the grace of the Father, so that you may become witnesses to his love.

With these sentiments, wishing you a year rich in faith and in evangelical commitment, I bless you all from my heart.

From the Vatican, 6 January 1999, Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord.

**January 22, 1999**  
**Ecclesia in America**

Young people, the hope of the future

47. Young people are a great force in society and for evangelization. They “represent quite a large part of the population in many nations of America. On their encounter with the living Christ depends the hope and expectation of a future of greater communion and solidarity for the Church and society in America”. (179) The particular Churches throughout the continent are clearly making real efforts to catechize young people before Confirmation and to offer them other kinds of support in developing their relationship with Christ and their knowledge of the Gospel. The formation process for young people must be constant and active, capable of helping them to find their place in the Church and in the world. Consequently, youth ministry must be one of the primary concerns of Pastors and communities.

In fact, while many young people in America are searching for true meaning in life and are thirsting for God, quite often they lack the conditions needed to take advantage of their abilities and realize their aspirations. Unfortunately, unemployment and the lack of prospects for the future lead them at times to withdrawal and to violence. The resulting sense of frustration not infrequently leads them to abandon the search for God. Faced with this complex situation, “the Church is committed to maintaining her pastoral and missionary commitment to young people, so that they will encounter today the living Jesus Christ”. (180)

In her pastoral activity the Church reaches a great number of adolescents and young people through programs for Christian families, catechesis, Catholic educational institutions and community life in parishes. But there are many others, especially among those affected by various kinds of poverty, who remain outside the range of the Church's activity. Young Christians, trained to have a mature missionary consciousness, must become apostles to their contemporaries. There is need for pastoral outreach to young people wherever they are found: in schools, universities, the workplace, the countryside, with appropriate adaptation to their particular inclinations. At the parish and diocesan level it would be helpful also to develop a pastoral outreach that takes account of the changing world of young people. Such an effort should seek to engage them in dialogue, take advantage of favorable occasions for meetings on a larger scale, encourage local initiatives and make the most of programs already in place at the interdiocesan and international levels.

And what of those young people who do not grow out of their adolescent attitudes and find it difficult to take on serious and lasting responsibilities? In response to this lack of maturity, young people need to be invited to have courage and they need to be trained to appreciate the value of life-long commitments such as the priesthood, consecrated life and Christian married life. (181)

**January 26, 1999**  
 VISIT TO ST. LOUIS: Meeting with Young People  
 Pope John Paul II

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The time for action is now!  
 Let your light shine, Holy Father tells young Americans

After arrival ceremonies at the St Louis airport on Tuesday, 26 January, the Holy Father went to the Archbishop's Residence, where he had lunch and rested. In the evening he was taken to the Kiel Center, a sports complex, for a meeting with young people. Their gathering took the form of a prayer service with readings from the New Testament (1 Tm 4:7-12; Mt 5:14-16), a twopart address by the Pope and a renewal by the young people of their commitment to live with Christ. Here is the text of the Holy Father's address, which was given in English.

(First Part)

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Dear Young People of St. Louis,  
Dear Young People of the United States,  
Praised be Jesus Christ!

1. Your warm and enthusiastic welcome makes me very happy. It tells me that tonight the Pope belongs to you. I have just been in Mexico City, to celebrate the conclusion of the Synod of Bishops for America. There I had the joy of being with many thousands of young people. And now, my joy continues here with you, the young people of St. Louis and Missouri, and of the whole United States.

2. We are gathered here this evening to listen to Jesus as he speaks to us through his word and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

We have just heard the Apostle Paul say to Timothy, his young fellow evangelizer: "Train yourself for devotion" (1 Tim 4:7). These are important words for every Christian, for everyone who truly seeks to follow the Lord and to put his words into practice. They are especially important for you, the young people of the Church. And so you need to ask yourselves: what training am I doing in order to live a truly Christian life?

You all know what "training" is, and what it signifies. In fact, we are here in the Kiel Center where many people train long and hard in order to compete in different sports. Today, this impressive stadium has become another kind of training ground — not for hockey or soccer or basketball, but for that training that will help you to live your faith in Jesus more decisively. This is the "training in devotion" that Saint Paul is referring to — the training that makes it possible for you to give yourselves without reservation to the Lord and to the work that he calls you to do!

3. I am told that there was much excitement in St. Louis during the recent baseball season, when two great players (Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa) were competing to break the home-run record. You can feel the same great enthusiasm as you train for a different goal: the goal of following Christ, the goal of bringing his message to the world.

Each one of you belongs to Christ, and Christ belongs to you. At Baptism you were claimed for Christ with the Sign of the Cross; you received the Catholic faith as a treasure to be shared with others. In Confirmation, you were sealed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit and strengthened for your Christian mission and vocation. In the Eucharist, you receive the food that nourishes you for the spiritual challenges of each day.

I am especially pleased that so many of you had the opportunity today to receive the Sacrament of Penance, the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In this Sacrament you experience the Savior's tender mercy and love in a most personal way, when you are freed from sin and from its ugly companion which is shame. Your burdens are lifted and you experience the joy of new life in Christ.

Your belonging to the Church can find no greater expression or support than by sharing in the Eucharist every Sunday in your parishes. Christ gives us the gift of his body and blood to make us one body, one spirit in him, to bring us more deeply into communion with him and with all the members of his Body, the Church. Make the Sunday celebration in your parishes a real encounter with Jesus in the community of his followers: this is an essential part of your "training in devotion" to the Lord!

4. Dear young friends, in the Reading we have just heard, the Apostle Paul tells Timothy: "Let no one have contempt for your youth" (1 Tim 4:12). He says this because youth is a marvelous gift of God. It is a time of special energies, special opportunities and special responsibilities. Christ and the Church need your special talents. Use well the gifts the Lord has given you!

This is the time of your "training", of your physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual development. But this does not mean that you can put off until later your meeting with Christ and your sharing in the Church's mission. Even though you are young, the time for action is now! Jesus does not have "contempt for your youth". He does not set you aside for a later time when you will be older and your training will be complete. Your training will never be finished. Christians are always in training. You are ready for what



Christ wants of you now. He wants you – all of you – to be light to the world, as only young people can be light. It is time to let your light shine!

In all my travels I tell the world about your youthful energies, your gifts and your readiness to love and serve. And wherever I go I challenge young people – as a friend – to live in the light and truth of Jesus Christ.

I urge you to let his word enter your hearts, and then from the bottom of your hearts to tell him: “Here I am Lord, I come to do your will!” (cf. Heb 10:7).

## Second Part

“You are the light of the world. . . Your light must shine before all” (Mt 5:14.16).

Dear Young People,

1. Ask yourselves: Do I believe these words of Jesus in the Gospel? Jesus is calling you the light of the world. He is asking you to let your light shine before others. I know that in your hearts you want to say: “Here I am, Lord. Here I am. I come to do your will” (Responsorial Psalm; cf. Heb 10:7). But only if you are one with Jesus can you share his light and be a light to the world.

Are you ready for this?

Sadly, too many people today are living apart from the light – in a world of illusions, a world of fleeting shadows and promises unfulfilled. If you look to Jesus, if you live the Truth that is Jesus, you will have in you the light that reveals the truths and values on which to build your own happiness, while building a world of justice, peace and solidarity. Remember what Jesus said: “I am the light of the world; those who follow me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (cf. Jn 8:12).

Because Jesus is the Light, we too become light when we proclaim him. This is the heart of the Christian mission to which each of you has been called through Baptism and Confirmation. You are called to make the light of Christ shine brightly in the world.

2. When you were little, were you sometimes afraid of the dark? Today you are no longer children afraid of the dark. You are teenagers and young adults. But already you realize that there is another kind of darkness in the world: the darkness of doubt and uncertainty. You may feel the darkness of loneliness and isolation. Your anxieties may come from questions about your future, or regrets about past choices.

Sometimes the world itself seems filled with darkness. The darkness of children who go hungry and even die. The darkness of homeless people who lack work and proper medical care. The darkness of violence: violence against the unborn child, violence in families, the violence of gangs, the violence of sexual abuse, the violence of drugs that destroy the body, mind and heart. There is something terribly wrong when so many young people are overcome by hopelessness to the point of taking their own lives. And already in parts of this nation, laws have been passed which allow doctors to end the lives of the very people they are sworn to help. God’s gift of life is being rejected. Death is chosen over life, and this brings with it the darkness of despair.

3. But you believe in the light (cf. Jn 12:36)! Do not listen to those who encourage you to lie, to shirk responsibility, to put yourselves first. Do not listen to those who tell you that chastity is passé. In your hearts you know that true love is a gift from God and respects his plan for the union of man and woman in marriage. Do not be taken in by false values and deceptive slogans, especially about your freedom. True freedom is a wonderful gift from God, and it has been a cherished part of your country’s history. But when freedom is separated from truth, individuals lose their moral direction and the very fabric of society begins to unravel.

Freedom is not the ability to do anything we want, whenever we want. Rather, freedom is the ability to live responsibly the truth of our relationship with God and with one another. Remember what Jesus said: “you will know the truth and the truth will set you free” (Jn 8:32). Let no one mislead you or prevent you

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from seeing what really matters. Turn to Jesus, listen to him, and discover the true meaning and direction of your lives.

4. You are children of the light (cf. Jn 12:36)! You belong to Christ, and he has called you by name. Your first responsibility is to get to know as much as you can about him, in your parishes, in religious instruction in your high schools and colleges, in your youth groups and Newman Centers.

But you will get to know him truly and personally only through prayer. What is needed is that you talk to him, and listen to him.

Today we are living in an age of instant communications. But do you realize what a unique form of communication prayer is? Prayer enables us to meet God at the most profound level of our being. It connects us directly to God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in a constant exchange of love.

Through prayer you will learn to become the light of the world, because in prayer you become one with the source of our true light, Jesus himself.

5. Each of you has a special mission in life, and you are each called to be a disciple of Christ. Many of you will serve God in the vocation of Christian married life; some of you will serve him as dedicated single persons; some as priests and religious. But all of you must be the light of the world. To those of you who think that Christ may be inviting you to follow him in the priesthood or the consecrated life I make this personal appeal: I ask you to open your hearts generously to him; do not delay your response. The Lord will help you to know his will; he will help you to follow your vocation courageously.

6. Young friends, in the days and weeks and years ahead, for as long as you remember this evening, remember that the Pope came to the United States, to the City of St. Louis, to call the young people of America to Christ, to invite you to follow him. He came to challenge you to be the light of the world! "The light shines in the darkness and the darkness does not overcome it" (Jn 1:5). Jesus who has conquered sin and death reminds you: "I am with you always" (Mt 28:20). He says: "Courage! It is I; have no fear" (Mk 6:50).

On the horizon of this city stands the Gateway Arch, which often catches the sunlight in its different colors and hues. In a similar way, in a thousand different ways, you must reflect the light of Christ through your lives of prayer and joyful service of others. With the help of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, the young people of America will do this magnificently!

Remember: Christ is calling you; the Church needs you; the Pope believes in you and he expects great things of you!

Praised be Jesus Christ!

At the end of the service some of the young people gave the Holy Father a hockey stick and jersey. The Pope appreciated the gift and said extemporaneously.

So I am prepared to return once more to play hockey! But if I will be able to, that is the question. Perhaps after this meeting I will be a bit more ready!

**January 26, 1999**

VISIT TO ST. LOUIS 99: Written Message to Children  
Pope John Paul II

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During his meeting with young people at the Kiel Center on Tuesday evening, 26 January, the Holy Father also met the administrators of Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital and some of the young patients undergoing chemotherapy at the paediatric facility, accompanied by their parents. The Pope gave them a written Message addressed to all the children being treated at the hospital. Here is the English text of his Message, which was dated 26 January.

To the Children at Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital

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I am happy, dear children, during my visit to St. Louis, to be able to see some of you personally at the Kiel Center, and to be able to embrace you one by one.

You are all dear to my heart, even if I have not been able to see all of you today. I want the young boys and girls being taken care of at Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital and all sick children everywhere to know that the Pope prays for each one of you.

You know how much Jesus loved children and how pleased he was to be with them. You too are very special to him. Some of you and your friends have suffered a lot and you feel the burden of what has happened to you. I want to encourage you to be patient and to stay close to Jesus, who suffered and died on the Cross out of love for you and me.

Surrounding you are other people who love you very much. Among them are the Franciscan Sisters of Mary; for many years they have faithfully administered this hospital. There are also those who actually take care of you and those who work hard to support the Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital. And of course there are your families and friends who love you very much and want you to be strong and brave. I am happy to bless all of them.

Today I am thinking also about so many other sick people in the Archdiocese of St. Louis and beyond. I send my greetings to all the sick and suffering, and to the elderly, and I assure them of a special place in my daily prayers. They have a particularly fruitful role in the spiritual heart of the Church.

I invite all the sick to trust in Jesus who said: "I am the resurrection and the life" (Jn 11:25). In union with him, even our trials and sufferings are precious for the redemption of the world. May his Mother Mary accompany you and fill your hearts with joy. With my Apostolic Blessing.

From St. Louis, January 26, 1999

**March 28, 1999**

14TH WORLD YOUTH DAY – ROME

Pope John Paul II: Christ who gladdens your youth

Homily of the Palm Sunday Liturgy, 28 March 1999

1. "He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (Phil 2:8).

The celebration of Holy Week begins with the "Hosanna!" of Palm Sunday and culminates in the "Crucify him!" of Good Friday. But this is not a contradiction; rather it is the heart of the mystery the liturgy wants to proclaim: Jesus willingly gave himself up to his passion; he did not find himself crushed by superior forces (cf. Jn 10:18). It was he himself who, in discerning the Father's will, understood that his hour had come and he accepted it with the free obedience of the Son and with infinite love for mankind.

Jesus brought our sins to the Cross and our sins brought Jesus to the Cross: he was crushed for our iniquities (cf. Is 53:5). The prophet said in reply to David, who was seeking the one responsible for the deed Nathan had recounted to him: "You are the man!" (2 Sm 12:7). The Word of God gives us the same answer as we wonder what caused Jesus' death: "You are the man!". Indeed, Jesus' trial and passion are repeated in the world today and renewed by every person who abandons himself to sin and can only prolong the cry: "Not this man, but Barabbas! Crucify him!".

'Whoever loses his life for my sake will find it'

2. Looking at Jesus in his passion, we see humanity's sufferings as well as our personal histories reflected as in a mirror. Although there was no sin in Christ, he took upon himself what man could not endure: injustice, evil, sin, hatred, suffering and finally death. In Christ, the humiliated and suffering Son of Man, God loves everyone, forgives everyone and confers the ultimate meaning on human life.

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We are here this morning to receive this message from the Father who loves us. We can ask ourselves: what does he want of us? He wants us to look at Jesus and be willing to follow him in his passion in order to share in his Resurrection. At this moment we recall Jesus' words to his disciples: "The cup that I drink, you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized" (Mk 10:39). "If any man would come after me, let him ... take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Mt 16:24-25).

The "hosanna" and the "crucify him" thus become the way to measure how one conceives of life, faith and Christian witness: we must not be discouraged by defeat nor exalted by victory because, as with Christ, the only victory is fidelity to the mission received from the Father. "Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name" (Phil 2:9).

3. The first part of today's celebration let us relive Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. On that fateful day, who realized that Jesus of Nazareth, the Teacher who spoke with authority (cf. Lk 4:32), was the Messiah, the son of David, the awaited and promised Saviour? It was the people, and among them the most enthusiastic and active were the young, who thus in a way became the Messiah's "heralds". They understood that it was the hour of God, the longed-for and blessed hour awaited by Israel for centuries, and, waving palm and olive branches, they proclaimed Jesus' triumph.

In continuity with the spirit of that event we have now been celebrating World Youth Day for 14 years, when young people, together with their Pastors, joyfully profess and proclaim their faith in Christ, question themselves about their deepest aspirations, experience ecclesial communion and confirm and renew their commitment to the urgent task of the new evangelization.

They seek the Lord in the heart of the paschal mystery. The mystery of the glorious Cross becomes for them the great gift and sign of a mature faith. With his Cross, the universal symbol of Love, Christ leads the world's young people in the great "assembly" of the kingdom of God, who transforms hearts and societies.

How can we not give thanks to the Lord for the World Youth Days, which began in 1985 precisely in St Peter's Square and which, following the "Holy Year Cross", have traveled the world like a long pilgrimage towards the new millennium? How can we not praise God, who reveals the secrets of his kingdom to the young (cf. Mt 11:25), for all the good fruits and Christian witness which this successful initiative has produced?

Today's World Youth Day is the last in this century and in this millennium before the great gathering of the Jubilee: it thus has special significance. May the contribution of all make it a powerful experience of faith and ecclesial communion.

Jesus Christ is the Lord of time and history

4. The young people of Jerusalem shouted: "Hosanna to the Son of David!". Young people, my friends, do you too want to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah, the Saviour, the Teacher, the Leader, the Friend of your life, as your peers did on that day so long ago? Remember: he alone knows deeply what is in every human being (cf. Jn 2:25); he alone teaches us to be open to the mystery and to call God our Father, "Abba"; he alone makes us capable of selfless love for our fellow human beings, accepted and recognized as "brothers" and "sisters".

Dear young people, go joyfully to meet Christ, who gladdens your youth. See him and meet him by clinging to his word and his mysterious presence in the Church and the sacraments. Live with him in fidelity to his Gospel: demanding, it is true, but at the same time the only source of hope and true happiness. Love him in the face of your brother who needs justice, help, friendship and love.

On the eve of the third millennium, this is your hour. May the contemporary world open new paths before you and call you to be bearers of faith and joy, as expressed by the palm and olive branches you are holding today, symbols of a new springtime of grace, beauty, goodness and peace. The Lord Jesus is with you and is accompanying you!

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5. Every year during Holy Week, the Church enters into the paschal mystery with trepidation, as she commemorates the Lord's Death and Resurrection.

It is precisely through the paschal mystery which gave her birth that she can proclaim to the world, in the words and deeds of her children: "Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2: 11).

Yes! Jesus Christ is Lord! He is the Lord of time and history, the Redeemer and the Saviour of man. Blessed be he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna!

Amen.

**April 22, 1999**

AD LIMINA APOSTOLORUM: CANADIAN BISHOPS – QUEBEC

Youth need sound catechesis and a solid sacramental life

Pope John Paul II

"I am delighted with the attention that is paid to young people in families, parishes, schools and movements. I salute your efforts, as well as those of the many adults, priests, religious, parents and teachers, to offer the young a renewed and organized presentation of the faith, and I invite all the local communities to mobilize themselves in this task", the Holy Father said on Thursday, 22 April, to the Bishops of Quebec, the first group of Canadian Pastors to make their ad limina visit to Rome. The Pope reminded the Bishops that the pastoral care of priestly vocations is an essential dimension of their ministry, asking them to "entrust an active part of this work to some young priests who can be models and examples and who are the closest in age and mentality to the next generation". Here is a translation of his address, which was given in French.

Dear Brothers in the Episcopate,

1. On the occasion of your ad limina visit, a custom that links Catholic communities throughout the world to the 2,000-year-old tradition of the Church and expresses your communion with the Pope and his co-workers, I am delighted to welcome you today, Pastors of the Catholic Church in the Apostolic Region of Quebec. I cordially greet Bishop Pierre Morissette, your President, and each of you, especially the two new Auxiliary Bishops of Montreal and the Maronite and Melkite Ordinaries. Our meeting enables me to be close in thought to the priests and deacons who work zealously with you, the consecrated persons involved in the apostolate and those with a special mission of prayer, as well as the lay faithful who are staunchly devoted to serving the Church and society in their country.

In your quinquennial reports, you speak of your joy at seeing so many people taking part in the Church's mission, each according to his own specific activity. I give thanks with you for the renewed dynamism of your local communities. Please convey the affectionate encouragement of Peter's Successor to your closest co-workers, the ordained ministers, who faithfully bear the burden of the day, and tell the religious and lay people of your Dioceses of my trust and esteem for all they accomplish by letting the Lord guide them.

Church must help and support Christian parents

2. Yours is the first Apostolic Region of Canada to make its quinquennial visit this year. With the various groups of Bishops from your country who will come one after another in the weeks ahead, I hope to address important topics for the Church today, as I give you some points to reflect on in the spirit of what the Lord asked of Peter: "Strengthen your brothers" (Lk 22:31). In your reports, you mention the question of young people and the pastoral care you wish to develop with them. I will therefore devote more time today to certain aspects of this specific mission, but without attempting to give a complete picture of the local situations and the expectations of young people, which you know.

3. The Church in Quebec has a rich tradition of commitment to young people, who are the hope of the future (cf. *Ecclesia in America*, n. 47). I am delighted with the attention that is paid to young people in families, parishes, schools and movements. I salute your efforts, as well as those of the many adults, priests, religious, parents and teachers, to offer the young a renewed and organized presentation of the

faith, and I invite all the local communities to mobilize themselves in this task, especially in view of the Great Jubilee and the forthcoming World Youth Day, which will take place in Rome. The Jubilee Year is an incomparable opportunity for giving a new impetus to youth ministry.

4. Awakening faith within the framework of the family is crucial; it enables children to advance in their interior search for God, the Father of all life, and to discover the profound truth of the Christian mystery. Family prayer is also a great blessing, for it gives each person the possibility to learn the words of a filial relationship with the Lord. As the child develops his interior life and becomes *capax Dei*, as the Fathers of the Church said, the family has a specific and irreplaceable role in his human and spiritual formation. Early childhood is an important time for the discovery of human, moral and spiritual values. As you yourselves recognize, it is often an occasion for parents to question themselves about their own faith, their attachment to Christ and the conformity of their life with the Gospel. Indeed, how can parents respond to the demanding requests of their little ones and give an account of the hope that is in them if they do not take the time to deepen their own Christian journey, to encounter Christ in prayer, in reading the Scriptures and in ecclesial life? The Church must help and support couples and families so that they can become aware of their mission as teachers of faith and fulfil it.

5. You told me of the problems you encounter in the pastoral care of adolescents and young people. However you stress that adults are committed to accompanying them zealously, using all their qualities as pastoral leaders and their ecclesial sense. I encourage them not to despair if they do not immediately see the results of their efforts. May they always remember that they are instruments which the Holy Spirit uses in his own mysterious way! In contemporary society, which does not offer any meaning for their life, young people carry within themselves questions and sufferings which are expressed in forms of personal and social behaviour which can be disconcerting to those who are close to them, especially the phenomena of violence and drugs, as well as thoughts of suicide. 'Youth is a time of an especially intense discovery of one's self and one's 'choice of life'. It is a time for growth which ought to progress 'in wisdom, age and grace before God and people' (Lk 2:52)" (Christi-fideles laici, n. 46). Education requires endless patience and loving closeness. This helps young people to love one another and to discover that they are loved by adults and, through them, by God who has confidence in them. I invite you to develop and strengthen the pastoral care of youth, particularly by sending on mission to them young people who have had special spiritual, but also human and psychological formation: priests, deacons, religious and lay persons.

Young people can find Christ in the sacraments

Young people need competent educators and spiritual advisers to guide them wisely and sensitively, concerned to let them mature gradually, to sow the seed of God in their hearts and to be of service in their "encounter with the living Jesus Christ", which "is the path to conversion, communion and solidarity" (cf. *Ecclesia in America*, nn. 7; 27). In this area it is important that priests also offer young people a solid sacramental life, especially the sacrament of forgiveness. In the personal encounter with Christ's minister and through the personal confession of his sins, the young person will become aware of the Lord's love and the response he must make; he will unburden himself to the Lord; he will learn to live in truth; he will be guided on his way and will find the means to struggle against sin..

6. In addition, I cannot too strongly recommend that priests, consecrated persons and lay people who are skilled in this area should offer spiritual direction to young people so that they can review the different stages of their life under God's eyes, discern his presence and do his will, the source of profound freedom. Guidance by an adult whom the young person trusts will help him overcome the most difficult inner struggles, analyze his own conduct, make decisions according to a scale of values and enter into an ever closer relationship with Christ. Likewise, in drawing close to young people, adults are someone they can talk to and the witnesses they need in order to have a calm vision of their future as human beings and Christians. Thus young people will be able to listen with trust to Christ's call to put out into the deep (cf. Lk 5:4); they will dare to reveal their Christian identity and will be missionaries among their friends in a society where, as you say, faith tends to be privatized and hence the Church has difficulty in making herself known.

For the young to grow in faith, you should also provide them a place and give them their share of responsibility, not only in their own age groups but also in the local communities, so that they will feel they are an active part of the whole Church, praying, gathering for Sunday Mass, finding strength in

sacramental life and living charity. In this way young people will realize that society and the Church need them and that they are called to serve their brothers and sisters in order to build the civilization of love.

In your Dioceses, large gatherings or small group meetings are regularly organized to help young people reflect on their emotional life and the vocation to marriage, thereby communicating to them the meaning and value of human sexuality. I salute all the adults who are involved in this educational process and invite them to pursue their mission, so that young people may be offered the teaching of the Church, which will be constructive for their human and spiritual formation. In a world where the family cell is fragile and many wounds are deeply affecting young people, particularly those who experience the separation of parents and the creation of new families, it is the Church's duty to educate them in an emotional life that is built on sound human and moral values, so that tomorrow they can Commit themselves to married life, conscious of their responsibilities and the mission it represents for their spouse and children.

Help children develop a deep spiritual life

7. Throughout childhood and adolescence, Christian communities and educators should be attentive to developing a well-structured catechesis, so that young people can know the chief elements of the Christian mystery. In this spirit, it is important to provide a follow-up to the sacraments of Christian initiation, so that children can have a deep spiritual and ecclesial life that will help them throughout their lives. I invite the faithful to make continual efforts to pass their faith and values on to children. Their formation cannot consist only of scientific and technical training. It must incorporate the anthropological, moral and spiritual dimensions in order to build the young person's personality. I ask all teachers and administrators in religious educational institutions to see that their specific Catholic identity, which is a treasure, is neither lost nor put under a bushel.

8. One of the most essential dimensions of the Bishop's ministry is the pastoral care of priestly vocations, which should be constantly organized and developed with the help of priests as well as solid and dynamic lay people, while taking care to entrust an active part of this work to some young priests who can be models and examples and who are the closest in age and mentality to the next generation. They will show that the priestly ministry is a source of joy and stability. The pastoral care of vocations also requires the involvement of all the local Church leaders. It is a question of sowing the word of God in young boys' hearts, awakening in them a desire to follow Christ and generously transmitting the Lord's call to them, getting forth "explicitly and forcefully the priestly vocation as a real possibility for those young people who demonstrate the necessary gifts and talents" (*Pastores dabō vobis* n. 39). You should also help them to discover the radical commitment which this implies through the gift of self to Christ in celibacy for the service of their brethren. Possible confusions which would downplay the connection between the priesthood and celibacy can only be harmful to the health searching of young people and their Lure priestly commitment. I am delighted that in certain Dioceses there are some minor seminaries where young men can really, explore a priestly vocation, while pursuing classical studies. These are a seedbed of vocations and must not be neglected. I also invite all priests to be attentive to young men, to awaken vocations and not to be afraid to suggest the path of the priesthood to them.

9. Jesus also calls certain young men and women to follow him more exclusively and to consecrate themselves totally to him in religious life, to offer the world a witness which 'in the first place ... should entail the affirmation of the of God and of eternal life, as evidenced in the following and imitation of the chaste, poor and obedient Christ, who was completely consecrated to the glory of God and to the love of his brethren' (*Vita consecrata*, n. 85). Christ's call to consecrated life is an eloquent witness for today's world, by calling to mind that true happiness comes from Christ and that the human person's freedom can neither be separated from the truth nor from God (cf. *ibid.*, nn. 87-91). I urge men and women religious to show young people that a life totally given in radical love for Christ and his Church brings happiness.

10. I encourage you to continue to vitalize the living forces of the Church in Quebec so that everyone in families, parishes, schools or movements will share in the mission, of walking with young people, guiding them in their growth, offering them the faith as they search, so that they will joyfully discover the goodness of the Father, live the Good News of Jesus Christ and be led by the power of the Holy Spirit. In this way they can open themselves to the Lord's call to take part in the work of Creation and Redemption in brotherhood and solidarity, thus discovering that life has meaning, that it is worthwhile to commit

themselves to the priesthood, the consecrated life or marriage, to work in promoting the common good in the world and to participate wholeheartedly in the communion and mission of the Church.

11. At the end of our meeting, I encourage you to persevere in your episcopal mission, while inviting you to continue your fraternal collaboration and to support one another in your ministry: thus your diocesan Churches will be more united and will help one another confront the challenges you face by being communities centred on Jesus Christ, in dialogue with the world.

Please convey the greetings of Peter's Successor to your co-workers and to the People of God entrusted to your care, and in a special way to young people. As I invoke the motherly intercession of the Virgin Mary, I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing to you and to all your diocesans.

**June 29, 1999**

Message for the 15th World Youth Day

Pope John Paul II, June 29, 1999

“The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us” (Jn 1:14)

My dear young people

1. Fifteen years ago, at the close of the Holy Year of the Redemption, I entrusted to you a great wooden Cross, asking you to carry it across the world as a sign of the love which the Lord Jesus has for mankind and to proclaim to everyone that only in Christ who died and is risen is there salvation and redemption. Since that day, carried by generous hands and hearts, the Cross has made a long, uninterrupted pilgrimage across the continents, to demonstrate that the Cross walks with young people and young people walk with the Cross.

Around the “Holy Year Cross”, World Youth Days were born and developed as meaningful “moments of rest” along your journey as young Christians; a constant, pressing invitation to build life on the rock that is Christ. How can we fail to bless the Lord for the countless fruits born in the hearts of individuals and in the whole Church thanks to the World Youth Days, which in this last part of the century have marked the journey of young believers towards the new millennium?

After spanning the continents, that Cross now returns to Rome bringing with it the prayers and commitment of millions of young people who have recognized it as a simple and sacred sign of God’s love for humanity. Because Rome, as you know, will host World Youth Day of the Year 2000, in the heart of the Great Jubilee.

Dear young people, I invite you therefore to undertake with joy the pilgrimage to Rome for this important ecclesial appointment, which will rightly be the “Youth Jubilee”. Prepare to enter the Holy Door, knowing that to pass through it is to strengthen faith in Him in order to live the new life which he has given to us (cfr *Incarnationis Mysterium* 8).

2. I chose as the theme for your 15th World Day the lapidary phrase with which Saint John the Apostle describes the profound mystery of God made man: “The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us” (Jn 1:14). What distinguishes the Christian faith from all other religions, is the certainty that the man Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God, the Word made flesh, the second person of the Trinity who came into the world. “Such is the joyous conviction of the Church from her beginning, whenever she sings ‘the mystery of our religion’: ‘He was manifested in the flesh’” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 463). God, the invisible one is alive and present in the person of Jesus, Son of Mary, the Theotokos, Mother of God. Jesus of Nazareth is God with us, Emmanuel: he who knows Him knows God, he who sees Him sees God, he who follows Him follows God, he who unites himself with Him is united with God (cfr Jn 12:44-50). In Jesus, born in Bethlehem, God embraces the human condition, making himself accessible, establishing a covenant with mankind.

On the eve of the new millennium, I make again to you my pressing appeal to open wide the doors to Christ who “to those who received him, gave power to become children of God” (Jn 1:12) To receive Jesus Christ means to accept from the Father the command to live, loving Him and our brothers and sisters, showing



solidarity to everyone, without distinction; it means believing that in the history of humanity even though it is marked by evil and suffering, the final word belongs to life and to love, because God came to dwell among us, so we may dwell in Him.

By his incarnation Christ became poor to enrich us with his poverty, and he gave us redemption, which is the fruit above all of the blood he shed on the Cross (cfr Catechism of the Catholic Church 517). On Calvary, "ours were the sufferings he bore ... he was pierced through for our faults" (Is 53: 4-5). The supreme sacrifice of his life, freely given for our salvation, is the proof of God's infinite love for us. Saint John the Apostle writes: "God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son so that everyone that believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life" (Jn 3:16). He sent Him to share in every way, except sin, our human condition; he "gave" him totally to men, despite their obstinate and homicidal rejection (cfr Mt 21:33-39), to obtain, through his death, their reconciliation. "The God of creation is revealed as the God of redemption, as the God who is 'faithful to himself' and faithful to his love for man and the world which he revealed on the day of creation ... how precious must man be in the eyes of the Creator, if he gained so great a Redeemer" (Redemptor hominis 9.10)

Jesus went towards his death. He did not draw back from any of the consequences of his being "with us", Emmanuel. He took our place, ransoming us on the Cross from evil and sin (cfr Evangelium vitae 50). Just as the Roman Centurion, seeing the manner in which Jesus died, understood that he was the Son of God (cfr Mk 15:39) so we too, seeing and contemplating the Crucified Lord, understand who God really is, as he reveals in Jesus the depth of his love for mankind (cfr Redemptor hominis 9). "Passion" means a passionate love, unconditioned self-giving: Christ's passion is the summit of an entire life "given" to his brothers and sisters to reveal the heart of the Father. The Cross, which seems to rise up from the earth, in actual fact reaches down from heaven, enfolding the universe in a divine embrace. The Cross reveals itself to be "the centre, meaning and goal of all history and of every human life" (Evangelium vitae 50).

"One man has died for all" (2 Cor 5:14): Christ "gave himself up in our place as a fragrant offering and a sacrifice to God" (Eph 5:2). Behind the death of Jesus there is a plan of love, which the faith of the Church calls the "mystery of the redemption": the whole of humanity is redeemed, that is, set free from the slavery of sin and led into the kingdom of God. Christ is Lord of heaven and earth. Whoever listens to his word and believes in the Father, who sent him, has eternal life (cfr Jn 5:25). He is the "Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (Jn 1:29.36), the high priest who, having suffered like us, is able to share our infirmity (cfr Heb 4:14) and "made perfect" through the painful experience of the Cross, becomes "for all who obey him, the source of eternal salvation" (Heb 5:9).

3. Dear young people, faced with these great mysteries, learn to lift your hearts in an attitude of contemplation. Stop and look with wonder at the infant Mary brought into the world, wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger: the infant is God himself who has come among us. Look at Jesus of Nazareth, received by some and scorned by others, despised and rejected: He is the Saviour of all. Adore Christ, our Redeemer, who ransoms us and frees us from sin and death: He is the living God, the source of Life.

Contemplate and reflect! God created us to share in his very own life; he calls us to be his children, living members of the mystical Body of Christ, luminous temple of the Spirit of Love. He calls us to be his: he wants us all to be saints. Dear young people, may it be your holy ambition to be holy, as He is holy.

You will ask me: but is it possible today to be saints? If we had to rely only on human strength, the undertaking would be truly impossible. You are well aware, in fact, of your successes and your failures; you are aware of the heavy burdens weighing on man, the many dangers which threaten him and the consequences caused by his sins. At times we may be gripped by discouragement and even come to think that it is impossible to change anything either in the world or in ourselves.

Although the journey is difficult, we can do everything in the One who is our Redeemer. Turn then to no one, except Jesus. Do not look elsewhere for that which only He can give you, because "of all the names in the world given to men this is the only one by which we can be saved" (Acts 4:12). With Christ, saintliness - the divine plan for every baptized person - becomes possible. Rely on Him; believe in the invincible power of the Gospel and place faith as the foundation of your hope. Jesus walks with you, he renews your heart and strengthens you with the vigour of his Spirit.

Young people of every continent, do not be afraid to be the saints of the new millennium! Be contemplative, love prayer; be coherent with your faith and generous in the service of your brothers and sisters, be active members of the Church and builders of peace. To succeed in this demanding project of life, continue to listen to His Word, draw strength from the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist and Penance. The Lord wants you to be intrepid apostles of his Gospel and builders of a new humanity. In fact, how could you say you believe in God made man without taking a firm position against all that destroys the human person and the family? If you believe that Christ has revealed the Father's love for every person, you cannot fail to strive to contribute to the building of a new world, founded on the power of love and forgiveness, on the struggle against injustice and all physical, moral and spiritual distress, on the orientation of politics, economy, culture and technology to the service of man and his integral development.

4. I sincerely wish that the Jubilee, now at the door, may be an opportune time for courageous spiritual renewal and an exceptional celebration of God's love for humanity. From the whole Church may there rise up "a hymn of praise and thanksgiving to the Father, who in his incomparable love granted us in Christ to be 'fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God'" (Incarnationis Mysterium 6). May we draw comfort from the certainty expressed by Saint Paul the Apostle: If God did not spare his only Son but gave him for us, how can he fail to give us everything with him? Who can separate us from the love of Christ? In every event of life, including death, we can be more than winners, by virtue of the One who loved us to the Cross (cfr Rom 8: 31-37).

The mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God and that of the Redemption he worked for all men, constitute the central message of our faith. The Church proclaims this down through the centuries, walking "amidst the misunderstandings and persecutions of the world and the consolations of God" (S. Augustine De Civ. Dei 18, 51, 2; PL 41,614) and she entrusts it to her children as a precious treasure to be safeguarded and shared.

You too, dear young people, are the receivers and the trustees of this heritage: "This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. And we are proud to profess it, in Jesus Christ Our Lord" (Roman Pontifical, Rite of Confirmation). We will proclaim it together on the occasion of the next World Youth Day, in which I hope very many of you will take part. Rome is a "city- shrine" where the memory of the Apostles Peter and Paul and other martyrs remind pilgrims of the vocation of every baptized person. Before the world, in August next year, we will repeat the profession of faith made by Saint Peter the Apostle: "Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (Jn 6:68) because "you are the Christ the Son of the Living God!" (Mt 16:16).

Also to you boys and girls who will be adults in the next century, is entrusted the "Book of Life", which on Christmas Eve this year the Pope, the first to cross the threshold of the Holy Door, will show to the Church and to the world as the wellspring of life and hope for the third millennium (Incarnationis Mysterium 8).

May it become your most precious treasure: in the careful study and generous acceptance of the Word of the Lord, you will find nourishment and strength for your daily life, you will find motivation for tireless commitment to the building of a civilization of love.

5. Let us now turn our eyes to the Virgin Mother of God, of whom the city of Rome treasures one of the earliest and most honoured monuments which the devotion of the Christian people has dedicated to her: the Basilica of Saint Mary Major.

The Incarnation of the Word and the Redemption of mankind are closely linked with the Annunciation when God revealed to Mary his plan and found in her, a young person like yourselves, a heart totally open to the action of his love. For centuries Christian devotion has recalled every day, with the recitation of the Angelus Domini, God's entrance into the history of man. May this prayer become your daily meditated prayer.

Mary is the dawn which precedes the rising of the Sun of justice, Christ our Redeemer. With her "yes" at the Annunciation, as she opened herself completely to Father's plan, she welcomed and made possible the incarnation of the Son. The first disciple, with her discreet presence she accompanied Jesus all the way to

Calvary and sustained the hope of the Apostles as they waited for the Resurrection and Pentecost. In the life of the Church she continues to be mystically the one who precedes the Lord's coming. To Mary, who fulfills without interruption her ministry as Mother of the Church and of each Christian, I entrust with confidence the preparation of the 15th World Youth Day. May Most Holy Mary teach you, dear young people, how to discern the will of the heavenly Father in your life. May she obtain for you the strength and the wisdom to speak to God and to speak about God. Through her example may she encourage you to be in the new millennium announcers of hope, love and peace.

Looking forward to meeting many of you in Rome next year, "I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace that has power to build you up and to give you your inheritance among all the sanctified" (Acts 20:32), while, gladly and with great affection, I bless all of you, with your families and your loved ones.

From the Vatican, June 29th 1999, solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul

Joannes Paulus P.P. II

**August 8, 1999**

MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER  
TO YOUTH MEETING IN SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

8 August 1999

Dear Young People of Europe,

A very affectionate greeting to all young Europeans!

1. I address you who have gathered here in Santiago de Compostela for the European Youth Meeting at the tomb of the first Apostle who gave his life as a witness to the Lord. I greet you from Rome and express my great trust in you and my joy in this meeting, which I join in spirit as a pilgrim of faith. For days or weeks, on foot or in various ways, you have traveled the 'Way to Santiago', setting out from the different cities and countries of our beloved old continent. You represent the youth of all Europe: Mediterranean, Central and Northern, Anglo-Saxon and Slav Europe. You are the European youth who, motivated by faith in Jesus Christ, have set out in this Holy Year of Compostela, the gate to the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000.

2. Dear young people, the Church looks to you with hope; she counts on you. You are the generation called to transmit the gift of faith to the new millennium. Do not fail Christ who, full of love, calls you to follow him and sends you out like the Apostle James to the ends of the earth. Take in your hands the pilgrim's staff - which is the word of God - and travel the roads of Europe, announcing with courage the Good News of Christ, the perfect Man, the new Man who reveals to the men and women of all times their greatness and dignity as children of God. This is the best service you can give society today: to offer the Gospel of Christ, incarnated in your life with all its radical newness. A newness that can win over the hearts of the young with its beauty, goodness and truth.

3. Young people of Europe: Let yourselves be renewed by Christ! The new evangelization - of which you must be protagonists - begins in oneself, through the conversion of the heart to Christ. Live in intimacy with him; discover the riches of his person and his mystery in prayer; turn to him when you are in need of the grace of forgiveness; seek him in the Eucharist, the source of life; serve him in the poor and needy who await his beneficial coming. Do not be satisfied with mediocrity. The kingdom of heaven is for those who are determined to enter it (cf. Lk 16:16; Mt 11:12). As I said 10 years ago here on this Mountain of Joy: Do not be afraid to be holy! Have the courage and humility to present yourselves to the world determined to be holy, since full, true freedom is born from holiness. This aspiration will help you discover genuine love, untainted by selfish and alienating permissiveness; it will make you grow in humanity through study and work; it will open you to a possible vocation to the total gift of self in the priesthood or the consecrated life; it will transform you from being 'slaves' of power, pleasure, money or a career, to being free young persons, 'masters' of your own life, ever ready to serve your needy brothers and sisters in the image of Christ the servant, to bear witness to the Gospel of love.

4. I entrust the spiritual fruits of the Jubilee Year of Compostela and of this European Youth Meeting to the Virgin Mary who, in the Gate of Glory of the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, is portrayed with an expressive gesture, accepting the divine will. She who according to a pious tradition gave great support to the Apostle James, is now called as the Star of the new millennium to guide the evangelizing steps of the Lord's new apostles as they build a united and peace-loving Europe, faithful to its Christian roots and the authentic values which made its history glorious and its presence beneficial on other continents; a Europe still capable of being a beacon of civilization and of encouraging world progress.

5. Before ending this Message, I would also like to greet the Bishops, the beloved priests and men and women religious, and all those who work with them in the pastoral care of young people.

I invoke the 'great pardon' of God the Father, rich in mercy, upon all of you, pilgrims of Compostela, and as I entrust you to the powerful protection of St James, with deep affection I impart my Apostolic Blessing to you: in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**September 25, 1999**

YOU BRING CHRIST TO THE ACADEMIC WORLD

Pope John Paul II

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On Saturday, 25 September, the Holy Father met participants in a world meeting of those entrusted by Episcopal Conferences with responsibility for university chaplaincies. The Holy Father reminded his listeners that the aim of every apostolic effort in the university world "must be to enable young people, teachers and everyone who works in the academic world to meet Christ personally". To achieve this, he said, a frank and open dialogue must exist between believers and the university world, since "wherever there is an effort to reflect honestly, wherever there is unbiased passion for the truth, a way is already open to Christ, the Saviour of mankind". Here is a translation of the Pope's address, which was given in Italian.

Your Eminences,

Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate,

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

1. This special audience, on the occasion of the world meeting of those entrusted by Episcopal Conferences with responsibility for university chaplaincies, is a joy for me since it affords me an opportunity, among other things, to express my keen appreciation of the work you are doing in the universities of your respective nations. I greet Cardinal Pio Laghi, whom I thank for his noble expression of the sentiments you all share. I also greet Cardinal Paul Poupard and the other prelates here, along with the academic authorities present. And I extend my greetings to all of you who devote your energies to such an important sphere as the university world.

This world meeting is certainly a worthwhile enrichment for you all, since it allows you to have a profitable exchange of experiences at the level of the local Churches. It also gives you the opportunity to work together on preparing the Jubilee for university students, which next year will bring to Rome numerous representatives of universities and scholastic institutes from every part of the world.

I know you are preparing for this event with commitment and dedication. In this regard, I wish to express my great pleasure with the booklet compiled by the Congregation for Catholic Education, together with the Pontifical Council for Culture and the Diocese of Rome, to awaken the interest of university students in the Great Jubilee and to prepare them for it. I entrust it to you and to all who work in university chaplaincies: it offers themes for reflection and practical suggestions which will find a creative response on each local scene, in order to converge again, with joy and enthusiasm, in the common celebration of the World Youth Day and, especially, in the Jubilee for university teachers next year.

To promote a renewed synthesis of faith and culture

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2. The theme you have chosen - the university for a new humanism - is boldly situated at the critical point where the dynamics of knowledge intersect with the word of the Gospel. I am sure that, entrusted to your care and to that of Catholic and ecclesiastical universities, it will not fail to bear abundant fruit. It is your intention to involve the whole university community in its various composite dimensions (students, teachers, administrative personnel) and in its specific nature as a privileged place for fostering and transmitting culture: the Gospel is the basis for a conception of the world and of man that continually bears cultural, humanistic and ethic values' which can influence one's entire view of life and history.

This confirms the university's primary vocation, sometimes jeopardized by distracting and pragmatic pressures: to be a place rich in formation and humanitas, serving the quality of life according to the integral truth about man on his journey through history. It is a culture of man and for man, which is spread and invigorated in the various fields of knowledge, in the ways and forms of morality, in the correct and harmonious ordering of society.

In this regard there are many problems that must be faced by university chaplaincies in their daily activity. New problems have appeared following the profound changes that have occurred in these final years of the millennium. At their root lies the constant challenge posed by the relationship between faith and reason, between faith and culture, between faith and scientific progress. In the university setting, the appearance of new knowledge and new cultural currents is always tied, directly or indirectly, to the great questions about man, about the meaning of his existence and action, about the value of conscience and the interpretation of freedom. This is why the priority task for Catholic intellectuals is to promote a renewed and vital synthesis between faith and culture, without ever forgetting that in their multifaceted educational activity the central reference-point remains Christ, the one Saviour of the world.

3. Dear brothers and sisters, proclaim by your life and your work the great news: "Ecce natus est nobis Salvator mundi"! This mystery is the very centre of the Jubilee celebration, which invites every believer to become a tireless messenger of this joyful truth.

To fulfil this apostolic task, however, he must let himself be docilely guided by the divine Word. This is inferred from St Paul's apostolic legacy to the elders of Ephesus: "I commend you", he said, "to God and to the Word of his grace" (Acts 20:32). The Apostle commends the elders to the Word, convinced that they, before being bearers of the Word, have been borne by the Word of God. This is precisely because the Word is powerful and effective. As something living and active (Heb 4:12), it has the power to save souls (Jas 1:21), to grant an inheritance among all who are sanctified (Acts 20:32), to impart the wisdom that leads to salvation (2 Tm 3:15, 17), because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who has faith (Rom 1:16).

In this connection, the Second Vatican Council states that the Gospel has the power continually to renew life and culture, to purify and elevate them (cf. *Gaudium et spes*, n. 58). We should not be discouraged when we see how inadequate our own forces are in relation to the problems we face. This was the drama St Paul lived, but, knowing the power of the Gospel, he told the Corinthians: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us" (2 Cor 4:7).

4. The aim of every apostolic effort in a university setting must be to enable young people, teachers and everyone who works in the academic world to meet Christ personally.

To this end, the specific service of a university ministry, which is committed to encouraging and coordinating these various ecclesial realities active in this field, proves very useful: from chaplaincies to the colleges, from parish groups to faculty groups. The horizons for the evangelization of culture, in fact, cannot be restricted to the confines of the university campus. It permeates all the Church's activity and becomes more effective the more it is integrated into an organized pastoral ministry.

The believer is not afraid to confront human thought

In this framework, it is desirable that a chaplaincy, the heart of university ministry, be set up at every university. It should be the driving force of formation and of the specific cultural programmes for

evangelization. Its task will be to foster a frank and open dialogue with the Various components of the university, offering suitable paths for seeking a personal encounter with Christ.

It will also be useful to promote significant initiatives at the national level, such as a committee on university ministry within the Episcopal Conference and a University Day, organized as a time of prayer, reflection and planning. As has already occurred on the European level, it would be beneficial to set up ways to coordinate the chaplains on every continent, in collaboration with the pastoral offices of the Episcopal Conferences, in order to strengthen cooperation between the manifold resources of the local programmes.

5. The Church invites you, dear brothers and sisters, to be evangelizers of culture. The believer, enlightened and guided by the Word of God, is not afraid to confront human thought. On the contrary, he embraces it as his own, in the certainty of the transcendence of revealed truth, which enlightens and makes the most of human effort. Wisdom and truth come from God: wherever there is an effort to reflect honestly, wherever there is unbiased passion for the truth, a way is already open to Christ, the Saviour of mankind.

Dear brothers and sisters, be convinced that you are not alone in this demanding missionary task. Christ is walking with you! Therefore, courageously proclaim him and bear witness to him: this message has the strength and the power to stir and astonish those who hear it, moving them to make a personal decision in its regard (cf. Lk 2:34-35).

I invoke the protection of Mary, Sedes Sapientiae, on you, on your university communities and on everyone you meet in your daily ministry, and, as I assure you of a special remembrance in my prayer, I cordially impart to you my affectionate Blessing.

**November 21, 1999**

MESSAGGIO DEL SANTO PADRE GIOVANNI PAOLO II  
AI PARTECIPANTI AL MEETING DEI GIOVANI VERSO IL GIUBILEO

Carissimi giovani!

1. Giunga il mio cordiale saluto a voi, partecipanti al Meeting dei Giovani verso il Giubileo, che in questi giorni si svolge a San Remo. Saluto il venerato Fratello Giacomo Barabino, Vescovo di Ventimiglia-San Remo, come pure tutti gli Organizzatori di questo vostro Incontro. Il mio pensiero si estende anche ai Membri dell'Associazione Il mio Dio canta giovane, ai Cantautori di Musica e Vita e di Magnificat, all'Associazione evangelica di musica cristiana Musictus.

Il tema del vostro Incontro è singolare: "Giovani 2000 lasciateci nascere". Con questa manifestazione voi volete offrire ai vostri coetanei un messaggio di speranza, proponendo una coraggiosa visione cristiana della realtà. Volete, insomma, voi giovani, essere apostoli del Vangelo tra i giovani del nostro tempo.

2. Questo Meeting, che avete voluto in preparazione al Grande Giubileo, esprime bene una caratteristica speciale della gioventù d'oggi, l'apertura cioè alla grande diversità culturale del mondo attuale. Per essere in grado di compiere questa impegnativa missione, dovete essere aperti anzitutto a Cristo, che con amore vi interpella e vi chiede di accogliere la sua parola. Siatene certi, Egli non vi deluderà! Chi lo incontra non teme di abbracciare coraggiosamente le esigenze del suo Vangelo! Chi lo ama scopre che la vita cristiana è dono di Dio, che ama ciascuno personalmente ed a ciascuno desidera affidare una missione.

Cari giovani, immagino che, come tutti i vostri coetanei, anche voi siate alla ricerca di ciò che è importante e centrale nell'esistenza; cercate qualcosa e qualcuno su cui contare totalmente.

Permettetemi di dirvi che capisco le vostre aspirazioni e le difficoltà che incontrate. Al contrario delle generazioni che vi hanno preceduto, specialmente di quelle che hanno conosciuto nella loro giovinezza i disagi connessi con la guerra mondiale e con altri conflitti, la maggior parte di voi ha potuto crescere in un clima di pace, di libertà e di sicurezza. Sapete però per esperienza che il benessere materiale non produce automaticamente felicità e serenità. Né basta la libertà garantita dalla legge per sentirsi liberi dentro, nell'intimo del cuore. La libertà dalla schiavitù delle passioni scaturisce dalla forza rigeneratrice della Grazia.

L'essere umano ha bisogno di Cristo. Solo nell'incontro con Lui trova la verità piena su se stesso. Seguire Cristo - lo sapete bene - richiede generosità e audacia. Ma è sulle sue orme che si raggiunge la piena realizzazione di se stessi e la vera libertà. A questo alludono le stesse canzoni religiose presentate a San Remo in questa gioiosa circostanza.

3. Cari giovani amici, col sostegno della grazia del Signore sappiate essere all'altezza della vostra dignità di risorti in Cristo. Apritevi alla gioia del Signore! Siete chiamati a cantare la festa della vita, della libertà, della riconciliazione; siete destinati a camminare sulle vie della fraternità e dell'amore.

Maria, Madre di Gesù e Madre nostra, vi protegga e vi assista in ogni momento. Questo, cari giovani, è l'augurio cordiale che desidero rivolgere a ciascuno di voi, come pure a quanti vi sono cari. Accompagno questi auspici con una speciale Benedizione, che volentieri vi invio quale segno della mia vicinanza spirituale e del mio affetto.

# 2000

January 15, 2000

TO GROUP PREPARING FOR WORLD YOUTH DAY  
Pope John Paul II

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Young People Must Bring The Gospel Into The New Millennium

On Saturday, 15 January, the Holy Father received the representatives of Episcopal Conferences and various ecclesial associations who were meeting in Rome to prepare for the next World Youth Day. Here is a translation of his address, which was given in Italian.

Dear Friends,

1. Welcome! I cordially greet you and joyfully welcome you while, as representatives of the Episcopal Conferences and ecclesial movements, associations and communities, you are holding your second international meeting for the next World Youth Day. I thank the Pontifical Council for the Laity and the Italian Committee for the 15th World Youth Day for their work of organization and coordination in preparing for this great jubilee event.

In a certain sense you represent the countless young people from every part of the world who have been on their way to Rome in spirit for some time now. Through you I would like to greet them individually and tell them: "The Pope loves you, is counting on you and expects you for the great celebration of faith and witness that we will celebrate together next August!". It will be very warm, maybe even warmer than in Paris.

2. The World Youth Days, begun in 1985, are by now an important event in the pilgrimage of the younger generation. They are providential opportunities for proclaiming and celebrating the mystery of Christ, Saviour and Redeemer of man, held up to the young people of our time as the foundation of their faith life and commitment to serving their brothers and sisters.

This year the World Day is part of the spiritual journey of the Jubilee and thus becomes the "Jubilee of Young People": a privileged occasion to contemplate together the mystery of the Incarnation of God the Son, to adore and to praise Emmanuel, God-with-us, and to discover the consequences for daily life that flow from so important a spiritual experience.

3. I pray the Lord that the next World Youth Day will encourage those taking part to profess their faith together at the beginning of the third millennium. In this city and in this Church of Rome, made fruitful by the blood of the Apostles and martyrs, the world's young people will gather to fix their gaze on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith (cf. Heb 12:2), and to offer him their Christian commitment in response.

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I am sure that they will set out again on their paths of life to be workers for the new evangelization and builders of the civilization of love. It is primarily their responsibility to "ferry" the Gospel into the first century of the new millennium. (cf. Tertio millennio adveniente, n. 58), imbuing their daily life with the unchangeable values contained in this eternal and unchangeable "Book of Life".

As I invoke the motherly protection of the Blessed Virgin on your work, I offer you my best wishes for a happy Year 2000 and impart my Blessing to you all.

**March 24, 2000**

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO THE YOUTH ON THE MOUNT OF BEATITUDES

"Consider your calling, brothers and sisters" (1 Cor 1:26).

1. Today these words of Saint Paul are addressed to all of us who have come here to the Mount of the Beatitudes. We sit on this hill like the first disciples, and we listen to Jesus. In the stillness, we hear his gentle and urgent voice, as gentle as this land itself and as urgent as a call to choose between life and death.

How many generations before us have been deeply moved by the Sermon on the Mount! How many young people down the centuries have gathered around Jesus to learn the words of eternal life, as you are gathered here today! How many young hearts have been inspired by the power of his personality and the compelling truth of his message! It is wonderful that you are here!

Thank you, Archbishop Boutros Mouallem, for your kind welcome. Please take my prayerful greeting to the whole Greek-Melkite community over which you preside. I extend my fraternal good wishes to the many Cardinals, to Patriarch Sabbah, and to many Bishops present and all the priests. I greet the members of the Latin community, including the Hebrew-speaking faithful, the Maronite community, the Syrian community, the Armenian community, the Chaldean community, and all our brothers and sisters of the other Christian Churches and Ecclesial Communities. I extend a special word of thanks to our Muslim friends, to the members of the Jewish faith and to the Druse community.

This great gathering is like a rehearsal for the World Youth Day to be held in August in Rome! The young man who spoke promised that you will come. Young people of Israel, of the Palestinian Territories, of Jordan and Cyprus; young people of the Middle East, of Africa and Asia, of Europe, America and Oceania! With love and affection I greet each one of you!

2. The first to hear the Beatitudes of Jesus bore in their hearts the memory of another mountain – Mount Sinai. Just a month ago, I had the grace of going there, where God spoke to Moses and gave the Law, "written with the finger of God" (Ex 31:18) on the tablets of stone. These two mountains – Sinai and the Mount of the Beatitudes – offer us the roadmap of our Christian life and a summary of our responsibilities to God and neighbour. The Law and the Beatitudes together mark the path of the following of Christ and the royal road to spiritual maturity and freedom.

The Ten Commandments of Sinai may seem negative: "You will have no false gods before me; . . . do not kill; do not commit adultery; do not steal; do not bear false witness..." (Ex 20:3, 13-16). But in fact they are supremely positive. Moving beyond the evil they name, they point the way to the law of love which is the first and greatest of the commandments: "You will love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul and all your mind. . . You will love your neighbour as yourself" (Mt 22:37, 39). Jesus himself says that he came not to abolish but to fulfil the Law (cf. Mt 5:17). His message is new but it does not destroy what went before; it leads what went before to its fullest potential. Jesus teaches that the way of love brings the Law to fulfilment (cf. Gal 5:14). And he taught this enormously important truth on this hill here in Galilee.

3. "Blessed are you!", he says, "all you who are poor in spirit, gentle and merciful, you who mourn, who care for what is right, who are pure in heart, who make peace, you who are persecuted! Blessed are you!" But the words of Jesus may seem strange. It is strange that Jesus exalts those whom the world generally regards as weak. He says to them, "Blessed are you who seem to be losers, because you are the true winners: the



kingdom of heaven is yours!" Spoken by him who is "gentle and humble in heart" (Mt 11:29), these words present a challenge which demands a deep and abiding metanoia of the spirit, a great change of heart.

You young people will understand why this change of heart is necessary! Because you are aware of another voice within you and all around you, a contradictory voice. It is a voice which says, "Blessed are the proud and violent, those who prosper at any cost, who are unscrupulous, pitiless, devious, who make war not peace, and persecute those who stand in their way". And this voice seems to make sense in a world where the violent often triumph and the devious seem to succeed. "Yes", says the voice of evil, "they are the ones who win. Happy are they!"

4. Jesus offers a very different message. Not far from this very place Jesus called his first disciples, as he calls you now. His call has always demanded a choice between the two voices competing for your hearts even now on this hill, the choice between good and evil, between life and death. Which voice will the young people of the twenty-first century choose to follow? To put your faith in Jesus means choosing to believe what he says, no matter how strange it may seem, and choosing to reject the claims of evil, no matter how sensible or attractive they may seem.

In the end, Jesus does not merely speak the Beatitudes. He lives the Beatitudes. He is the Beatitudes. Looking at him you will see what it means to be poor in spirit, gentle and merciful, to mourn, to care for what is right, to be pure in heart, to make peace, to be persecuted. This is why he has the right to say, "Come, follow me!" He does not say simply, "Do what I say". He says, "Come, follow me!"

You hear his voice on this hill, and you believe what he says. But like the first disciples at the Sea of Galilee, you must leave your boats and nets behind, and that is never easy – especially when you face an uncertain future and are tempted to lose faith in your Christian heritage. To be good Christians may seem beyond your strength in today's world. But Jesus does not stand by and leave you alone to face the challenge. He is always with you to transform your weakness into strength. Trust him when he says: "My grace is enough for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor 12:9)!

5. The disciples spent time with the Lord. They came to know and love him deeply. They discovered the meaning of what the Apostle Peter once said to Jesus: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (Jn 6:68). They discovered that the words of eternal life are the words of Sinai and the words of the Beatitudes. And this is the message which they spread everywhere.

At the moment of his Ascension Jesus gave his disciples a mission and this reassurance: "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations . . . and behold I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Mt 28:18-20). For two thousand years Christ's followers have carried out this mission. Now, at the dawn of the Third Millennium, it is your turn. It is your turn to go out into the world to preach the message of the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes. When God speaks, he speaks of things which have the greatest importance for each person, for the people of the twenty-first century no less than those of the first century. The Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes speak of truth and goodness, of grace and freedom: of all that is necessary to enter into Christ's Kingdom. Now it is your turn to be courageous apostles of that Kingdom!

Young people of the Holy Land, Young people of the world: answer the Lord with a heart that is willing and open! Willing and open, like the heart of the greatest daughter of Galilee, Mary, the Mother of Jesus. How did she respond? She said: "I am the servant of the Lord, let it be done to me according to your word" (Lk 1:38).

O Lord Jesus Christ, in this place that you knew and loved so well, listen to these generous young hearts! Continue to teach these young people the truth of the Commandments and the Beatitudes! Make them joyful witnesses to your truth and convinced apostles of your Kingdom! Be with them always, especially when following you and the Gospel becomes difficult and demanding! You will be their strength; you will be their victory!

O Lord Jesus, you have made these young people your friends: keep them for ever close to you! Amen.

**August 15, 2000**

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TO YOUTH AT SAINT JOHN LATERAN  
15 August 2000

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Serving Christ is freedom

On Tuesday evening, 15 August, the Solemnity of the Assumption, the Holy Father arrived at St John Lateran to open the 15th World Youth Day. More than a million young people had come to Rome to celebrate the Incarnation of Our Lord with the Pope during the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000,

Outside the cathedral of Rome, after being greeted by two young people and by Cardinal Ruini, Vicar of Rome, the Pope addressed the young and enthusiastic crowds before going on to St Peter's Square. Here is a translation of the Pope's address, which was given in Italian.

1. O Roma felix! - "O happy Rome!". With this exclamation, countless throngs of pilgrims before you, dear young people who are gathered for the 15th World Youth Day, traveled down the centuries to the city of Rome to kneel at the tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul.

"O happy Rome!". Happy because it was consecrated by the witness and blood of the Apostles Peter and Paul who still today, like two "verdant olive trees" and two "lamps lit", together with all the other saints and martyrs, show us the One whom we are here to celebrate: the Word who "become flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn 1: 14), Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the living testimony of the Father's eternal love for us.

"O happy Rome!", happy too because today this testimony which you preserve is alive and is offered to the world, in particular to the world of the young generations!

2. I greet you all affectionately, young people who belong to the Diocese of Rome and to the Church in Italy. I greet Cardinal Camillo Ruini, Vicar of Rome and President of the Italian Episcopal Conference, and am grateful to him for his words to me. I also thank the two young Romans who have greeted me on behalf of you all.

I am pleased to see so many of you and I congratulate all those who have helped young men and women from other countries to take part in this exceptional meeting as well. I know how much the young people of the various Italian Dioceses have done to prepare for this moment of an "exchange of happiness". In this city, which preserves the tombs and memorials of those who witnessed to the Saviour of the world, may every young person meet Jesus, the One who knows the secret of true happiness and promised it to his friends with these words: "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full" (Jn 15:11).

Dear friends, at this moment, so longed-for and so significant, I naturally think back to the First World Youth meeting which took place precisely here, in front of the cathedral of Rome. Today we are setting out from here to have a new experience at a global level: it is the meeting which opens a new century and a new millennium. My hope is that it will allow the hearts of all to encounter the eternally living Christ.

3. Young people, children of the Church whose Bishop is the Successor of Peter and who, as St Ignatius of Antioch said, is called to "preside in charity" (Ad Romanos, Introd.), be committed in these days to welcoming the other young people who have gathered here from all the regions of the world. Form heartfelt friendships with them. Make their stay here in Rome enjoyable, competing in the spirit of service and friendly welcome in the style of Jesus' friends—Lazarus, Martha and Mary—who often gave him hospitality at their house. Together with the young people from the 12 Dioceses on the borders of Rome, open the doors of your homes to the pilgrims of this World Youth Day, becoming a hospitable city, a friendly home, so that here too there may be a meeting today among friends: among us all and our great Friend, Jesus!

4. Live this World Day intensely, dear young pilgrims of the third millennium. Through your contact with your many peers who, like you, want to follow Christ, treasure the words that the Bishops will say to you, accepting the Lord's voice to strengthen your faith and to witness to it without fear, knowing you are heirs of a great past.

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In opening your Jubilee, dear young people, I would like to repeat the words with which I began my ministry as Bishop of Rome and Pastor of the universal Church; I would like them to guide your days in Rome: "Do not be afraid! Open, indeed, open wide the doors to Christ!". Open your hearts, your lives, your doubts, your difficulties, your joys and your affections to his saving power, and let him enter your hearts. "Do not be afraid! Christ knows what is in man. He alone knows it". I said this on 22 October 1978. I repeat it with the same conviction, with the same force today, seeing the hope of the Church and of the world shining in your eyes. Yes, let Christ govern your young lives; serve him with love. To serve Christ is freedom!

5. We are opening these days under the gaze of Mary Most Holy, whom we contemplate today assumed into heaven: may the example of the young Virgin of Nazareth help you to say "yes" to the Lord who is knocking at your door and wants to enter and make his dwelling within you.

Responding to the young people's cry, "Long live the Pope!", the Holy Father said extemporaneously:

He is alive, the Pope has been alive for 80 years and the young people want him young for ever. How can I do it? Thank you for your catechesis. I hope that you are enjoying your stay in Rome, that you feel ever close to the *Salus Populi Romani* and feel her motherly closeness. This is my last wish, because I have to go to St Peter's to welcome, in your name too, all those who have come to Rome from every part of the world to celebrate and live the Jubilee of Young People with you.

### **August 15, 2000**

Faith is work of Holy Spirit

On Tuesday evening, 15 August, after greeting the multitude of young people who had gathered to see him open the 15th World Youth Day at St John Lateran, the Holy Father was driven to St Peter's Square for the welcoming ceremony there. Expressing deep pleasure at the presence of all the young people, the Pope told them that "these days, which you will spend together in Rome at the World Youth Day, should help each of you to see more clearly the glory which belongs to the Son of God and to which we have been called in him by the Father. For this to happen, your faith in Christ must grow and be strengthened". He recommended that they let themselves "be moulded by the Holy Spirit". Here is a translation of the Pope's address to the young people, which was given in Italian.

1. Dear friends who have traveled so many miles in so many ways to come to Rome, to the tombs of the Apostles, let me begin by putting to you a question: what have you come here to find? You have come to celebrate your Jubilee: the Jubilee of the young Church. Yours is not just any journey: if you have set out on pilgrimage it is not just for the sake recreation or an interest in culture. Well then, let me ask again: what have you come in search of? Or rather, who have you come here to find?

There can be only one answer to that: you have come in search of Jesus Christ! But Jesus Christ has first gone in search of you. To celebrate the Jubilee can have no other meaning than that of celebrating and meeting Jesus Christ, the Word who took flesh and came to dwell among us.

The Prologue of St John's Gospel, which has just now been proclaimed, is in a sense Jesus' "visiting card". These words invite us to fix our eyes on the mystery that he is. These words hold a special message for you, dear young people: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God" (Jn 1:1-2).

Indicating to us the Word who is one in being with the Father, the eternal Word generated as God from God and light from light, the Evangelist takes us to the heart of the divine life, but also to the wellspring of the world. This Word in fact is the beginning of all creation: "all things were made through him, and without him was not made anything that was made" (Jn 1:3). The whole created world, before ever it came to be, was in the mind of God and was willed by him in an eternal plan of love. Therefore, if we look at the world in depth, allowing ourselves to marvel at the wisdom and beauty which God has poured out upon it, we can see in it a reflection of the Word, which biblical revelation unveils for us fully in the face of Jesus of Nazareth. In a sense, creation is the first "revelation" of him.

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2. The Prologue continues with these words: "In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness did not accept it" (Jn 1:4-5). For the Evangelist, the light is life, and death, the enemy of life, is darkness. Through the Word, all life appeared on the earth, and in the Word this life has its perfect fulfilment.

Identifying light and life, John is thinking of the life that is not just the biological life of the body but the life which comes from sharing in the very life of Christ. The Evangelist says: "The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world" (Jn 1:9). This enlightenment was given to humanity on the night of Bethlehem, when the eternal Word of the Father took a body from the Virgin Mary, became man and was born into the world. From that time onwards, every person who by faith shares in the mystery of that event experiences some measure of that enlightenment.

Christ himself, announcing that he was the light of the world, said one day: "While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become children of light" (Jn 12:36). This is a summons which the followers of Christ pass on to one another from generation to generation, trying to answer it in everyday life. Referring to this summons, St Paul writes: "Walk always as children of light, for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true" (Eph 5:8-9).

3. The heart of John's Prologue is the proclamation that "the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us" (1:14). A little before this, the Evangelist had declared: "He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. But to all who received him, he gave power to become children of God" (cf. 1:10-12). Dear friends, are you among those who have accepted Christ? Your presence here is already an answer to that question. You have come to Rome, in this Jubilee of the 2,000th anniversary of Christ's birth, in order to open your hearts to the power of life which is in him. You have come here to rediscover the truth about creation and to recover a sense of wonder at the beauty and the richness of the created world. You have come to renew within yourselves the awareness of the dignity of man, created in the image and likeness of God.

"We have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth" (Jn 1:14). A contemporary philosopher has emphasized the significance of death in human life, to the point of describing man as "a being made for death". The Gospel, on the contrary, makes it clear that man is a being made for life. Every person is called by God to share in the divine life. Man is a being called to glory.

These days, which you will spend together in Rome at the World Youth Day, should help each of you to see more clearly the glory which belongs to the Son of God and to which we have been called in him by the Father. For this to happen, your faith in Christ must grow and be strengthened.

4. I wish to bear witness to this faith here before all of you, young friends, at the tomb of the Apostle Peter, to whom the Lord wished me to succeed as Bishop of Rome. Beginning with myself, today I wish to tell you that I believe firmly in Jesus Christ our Lord. Yes, I believe, and I make my own the words of the Apostle Paul: "The life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20).

I remember how as a child, in my own family, I learned to pray and trust in God. I remember the life of my parish in Wadowice and that of St Stanislaus Kostka, in Debniki in Kraków where I received my basic training in Christian living. I cannot forget the experience of the war and the years of work in a factory. My priestly vocation came to its full maturity during the Second World War, during the occupation of Poland. The tragedy of the War gave a particular colouring to the gradual maturing of my vocation in life. In these circumstances, I perceived a light shining ever more brightly within me: the Lord wanted me to be a priest! I remember with feeling that moment in my life when, on the morning of 1 November 1946, I was ordained a priest.

My Credo continues in my present service to the Church. On 16 October 1978, after my election to the See of Peter, when I was asked "Do you accept?", I answered "With obedience in faith to Christ, my Lord, and trusting in the Mother of Christ and of the Church, no matter what the difficulties, I accept" (Redemptor hominis, n. 2). From that time on, I have tried to carry out my mission, drawing light and strength every day from the faith that binds me to Christ.

But my faith, like that of Peter and like the faith of each one of you, is not just my doing, my attachment to the truth of Christ and the Church. It is essentially and primarily the work of the Holy Spirit, a gift of his grace. The Lord gives his Spirit to me as he gives him to you, to help us say: "I believe", and then to use us to bear witness to him in every corner of the world.

5. Dear friends, why do I want to offer you this personal testimony at the beginning of your Jubilee? I do so in order to make it clear that the journey of faith is part of everything that happens in our lives. God is at work in the concrete and personal situations of each one of us: through them, sometimes in truly mysterious ways, the Word "made flesh", who came to live among us, makes himself present to us.

Dear young people, do not let the time that the Lord gives you go by as though everything happened by chance. St John has told us that everything has been made in Christ. Therefore, believe unshakably in him. He directs the history of individuals as well as the history of humanity. Certainly Christ respects our freedom, but in all the joyful or bitter circumstances of life he never stops asking us to believe in him, in his word, in the reality of the Church, in eternal life!

Don't ever think then that you are unknown to him, as if you were just a number in an anonymous crowd. Each one of you is precious to Christ, he knows you personally, he loves you tenderly, even when you are not aware of it.

6. Dear friends, who face the third millennium with all the ardour of your youth, give your full attention to the opportunity offered to you by World Youth Day in this Church of Rome, which today more than ever is your Church. Let yourselves be moulded by the Holy Spirit. Spend time in prayer, letting the Spirit speak to your hearts. To pray means to give some of your time to Christ, to entrust yourselves to him, to listen in silence to his word, to make it echo in your hearts.

Treat these days as though they were a great week of spiritual exercises; look for times of silence, prayer and recollection. Ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten your minds, ask him for the gift of a living faith which will forever give meaning to your lives, joining them to Christ, the Word made flesh.

May the Blessed Virgin Mary, who gave birth to Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit, Mary Salus Populi Romani and Mother of all peoples, and Sts Peter and Paul, and all the other saints and martyrs of this Church and of all the Churches to which you belong, sustain you on your journey.

**August 17, 2000**  
JUBILEE OF YOUTH

MASS WITH THE YOUNG PEOPLE  
OF THE SEVENTH INTERNATIONAL FORUM

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

Castel Gandolfo  
Thursday, 17 August 2000

1. "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you" (Jer 1: 5). The words God addressed to the prophet Jeremiah affect us personally. They remind us of God's plan for each of us. He knows us individually because he has chosen and loved us from eternity, entrusting to each of us a specific vocation within the general plan of salvation.

Dear young people of the International Forum, I am pleased to welcome you together with Cardinal James Francis Stafford, President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, and his staff. I greet you affectionately.

Quite rightly you feel personally challenged by the prophet's words. Indeed, many of you already hold a position of responsibility in your local Church and many others will be called to assume one.

It is therefore important that you bring with you the rich human, spiritual and ecclesial experience of this forum. You are sent out to proclaim to others the words of life you have received: they will act and take root in you the more you share them with others.

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Dear young people, do not doubt God's love for you! He has reserved for you a place in his heart and a mission in the world. The first reaction can be fear or doubt. These are sentiments which Jeremiah felt before you: "Ah, Lord God! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth" (Jer 1: 6). The task seems immense, because it assumes the dimensions of society and the world. But do not forget that when the Lord calls, he also provides the necessary strength and grace to answer his call.

Do not be afraid to accept your responsibilities: the Church needs you, she needs your commitment and generosity; the Pope needs you and, at the beginning of this new millennium, he is asking you to take the Gospel on the paths of the world.

2. In the responsorial psalm, we heard a question which echoes with special timeliness in today's polluted world: "How can a young man keep his way pure?" (Ps 118: 9). We also heard the simple, incisive reply: "By guarding it according to your word" (ibid.). Thus it is necessary to ask to acquire a taste for the Word of God and for the joy to be able to witness to something that is greater than us: "In the way of your testimonies I delight..." (Ps 119: 14).

Joy is also born of the knowledge that countless other people in the world accept, like us, the "Lord's commandments" and make them the substance of their lives. How rich is the Church's universality, her "catholicity"! What diversity according to the countries, rites, spirituality, associations, movements and communities, what beauty, and at the same what deep communion in the common values and shared attachment to Jesus, the Lord!

Living and praying together, you have perceived that the diversity of your ways of receiving and expressing the faith neither alienates you from one another nor makes you rivals. It simply highlights the riches of that one, extraordinary gift of Revelation, for which the world has so great a need.

3. In the Gospel we have just heard, the Risen One asks Peter the question that will determine his whole life: "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" (Jn 21: 16). Jesus does not ask him what his talents, gifts and skills are. Nor does he ask the one who had just denied him whether from now on he will be faithful to him, whether he will stand firm. He asks him the only thing that matters, the one thing that can give a vocation its foundation: do you love me?

Today Christ is asking each of you the same question: do you love me? He is not asking you whether you know how to speak to crowds, whether you can direct an organization or manage an estate. He is asking you to love him. All the rest will ensue. In fact, walking in Jesus' footsteps is not immediately expressed in things to do or say, but first of all in loving him, in staying with him, in totally accepting him into one's life.

Today you are giving Jesus' question a sincere answer. Some will be able to say with Peter: "Lord; you know that I love you!" (Jn 21: 16). Others will say: "Lord, you know how I would like to love you; teach me to love you, to be able to follow you". The important thing is to stay on the path, to continue the journey without losing sight of the goal, until the day when you will be able to say with all your heart: "You know that I love you!".

4. Dear young people, love Christ and love the Church! Love Christ as he loves you. Love the Church as Christ loves her.

Do not forget that true love sets no conditions; it does not calculate or complain but simply loves. How could you in fact be responsible for an inheritance which you only partly accepted? How can one share in building something that one does not love with all one's heart?

May communion in the Body and Blood of the Lord help everyone grow in love for Jesus and for his Body, which is the Church.

**August 19, 2000**

Address at Prayer Vigil  
15th World Youth Day

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Pope John Paul II, August 19, 2000

1. "But who do you say that I am?" (Mt 16:15).

Dear young people, it is with great joy that I meet you again at this Prayer Vigil, during which we wish to listen together to Christ whom we feel present among us. It is he who is speaking to us.

"Who do you say that I am?" Jesus asks his disciples this question near Caesarea Philippi. Simon Peter answers: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mt 16:16). The Master then turns to him with the surprising words: "Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven" (Mt 16:17).

What is the meaning of this dialogue? Why does Jesus want to know what people think about him? Why does he want to know what his disciples think about him?

Jesus wants his disciples to become aware of what is hidden in their own minds and hearts and to give voice to their conviction. At the same time, however, he knows that the judgment they will express will not be theirs alone, because it will reveal what God has poured into their hearts by the grace of faith.

This event which took place near Caesarea Philippi leads us, in a sense, into the "school of faith". There the mystery of the origin and development of our faith is disclosed. First there is the grace of revelation: an intimate, ineffable self-giving of God to man. There then follows the call to respond. Finally there comes the human response, a response which from that point on must give meaning and shape to one's entire life.

This is what faith is all about! It is the response of the rational and free human person to the word of the living God. The questions that Jesus asks, the answers given by the Apostles, and finally by Simon Peter, are a kind of examination on the maturity of the faith of those who are closest to Christ.

2. The conversation near Caesarea Philippi took place during the time leading up to the Passover, that is before Christ's passion and resurrection. We should also recall another event, when the Risen Christ checked the maturity of faith of his Apostles. This is the meeting with the Apostle Thomas. He was the only one not there when, after the resurrection, Christ came for the first time into the Upper Room. When the other disciples told him that they had seen the Lord, he would not believe it. He said: "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe" (Jn 20:25). A week later, the disciples were gathered together again and Thomas was with them. Jesus came through the closed door, and greeted the Apostles with the words: "Peace be with you" (Jn 20:26), and immediately he turned to Thomas: "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but believing" (Jn 20:27). Thomas then answered: "My Lord and my God!" (Jn 20:28).

The Upper Room in Jerusalem too was a kind of "school of faith" for the Apostles. However, in a sense, what happened to Thomas goes beyond what occurred near Caesarea Philippi. In the Upper Room we see a more radical dialectic of faith and unbelief, and, at the same time, an even deeper confession of the truth about Christ. It was certainly not easy to believe that the One who had been placed in the tomb three days earlier was alive again.

The divine Master had often announced that he would rise from the dead, and in many ways he had shown that he was the Lord of life. Yet the experience of his death was so overwhelming that people needed to meet him directly in order to believe in his resurrection: the Apostles in the Upper Room, the disciples on the road to Emmaus, the holy women beside the tomb. . . Thomas too needed it. But when his unbelief was directly confronted by the presence of Christ, the doubting Apostle spoke the words which express the deepest core of faith: If this is the case, if you are truly living despite having been killed, this means that you are "my Lord and my God".

In what happened to Thomas, the "school of faith" is enriched with a new element. Divine revelation, Jesus's question and man's response end in the disciple's personal encounter with the living Christ, with the Risen One. This encounter is the beginning of a new relationship between each one of us and Christ, a

relationship in which each of us comes to the vital realization that Christ is Lord and God; not only the Lord and God of the world and of humanity, but the Lord and God of my own individual human life. One day Saint Paul would write: "The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach. Because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Rom 10:8-9).

3. The readings of today's Liturgy describe the elements of the "school of faith" from which the Apostles emerged as people fully aware of the truth which God had revealed in Jesus Christ, the truth which would shape their personal lives and the life of the Church throughout history. This gathering in Rome, dear young people, is also a kind of "school of faith" for you, the disciples of today; it is the "school of faith" for all who proclaim Christ at the beginning of the Third Millennium.

You can all sense in yourselves the process of questions and answers that we have just been talking about. You can all measure the difficulties you have in believing, and even feel the temptation not to believe. But at the same time you can also experience a slowly maturing sense and conviction of your commitment in faith. In fact, there is always a meeting between God and the human person in this wonderful school of the human spirit, the school of faith. The Risen Christ always enters the Upper Room of our life and allows each of us to experience his presence and to declare: You, O Christ, you are "my Lord and my God".

Christ said to Thomas: "Because you have seen me, you have believed: blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe" (Jn 20:29). There is something of the Apostle Thomas in every human being. Each one is tempted by unbelief and each one asks the basic questions: Is it true that God exists? Is it true that he created the world? Is it true that the Son of God became man, died and rose from the dead? The answer comes as the person experiences God's presence. We have to open our eyes and our heart to the light of the Holy Spirit. Then the open wounds of the Risen Christ will speak to each of us: "Because you have seen me, you have believed: blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe".

4. Dear friends, to believe in Jesus today, to follow Jesus as Peter, Thomas, and the first Apostles and witnesses did, demands of us, just as it did in the past, that we take a stand for him, almost to the point at times of a new martyrdom: the martyrdom of those who, today as yesterday, are called to go against the tide in order to follow the divine Master, to follow "the Lamb wherever he goes" (Rev 14:4). It is not by chance, dear young people, that I wanted the witnesses to the faith in the twentieth century to be remembered at the Colosseum during this Holy Year.

Perhaps you will not have to shed your blood, but you will certainly be asked to be faithful to Christ! A faithfulness to be lived in the circumstances of everyday life: I am thinking of how difficult it is in today's world for engaged couples to be faithful to purity before marriage. I think of how the mutual fidelity of young married couples is put to the test. I think of friendships and how easily the temptation to be disloyal creeps in.

I think also of how those who have chosen the path of special consecration have to struggle to persevere in their dedication to God and to their brothers and sisters. I think of those who want to live a life of solidarity and love in a world where the only things that seem to matter are the logic of profit and one's personal or group interest.

I think too of those who work for peace and who see new outbreaks of war erupt and grow worse in different parts of the world; I think of those who work for human freedom and see people still slaves of themselves and of one another. I think of those who work to ensure love and respect for human life and who see life so often attacked and the respect due to life so often flouted.

5. Dear young people, in such a world is it hard to believe? Is it hard to believe in the Third Millennium? Yes! It is hard. There is no need to hide it. It is hard, but with the help of grace it can be done, as Jesus explained to Peter: "Neither flesh nor blood has revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven" (Mt 16:17).

This evening I will give you the Gospel. It is the Pope's gift to you at this unforgettable vigil. The word which it contains is the word of Jesus. If you listen to it in silence, in prayer, seeking help in understanding



what it means for your life from the wise counsel of your priests and teachers, then you will meet Christ and you will follow him, spending your lives day by day for him!

It is Jesus in fact that you seek when you dream of happiness; he is waiting for you when nothing else you find satisfies you; he is the beauty to which you are so attracted; it is he who provokes you with that thirst for fullness that will not let you settle for compromise; it is he who urges you to shed the masks of a false life; it is he who reads in your hearts your most genuine choices, the choices that others try to stifle. It is Jesus who stirs in you the desire to do something great with your lives, the will to follow an ideal, the refusal to allow yourselves to be grounded down by mediocrity, the courage to commit yourselves humbly and patiently to improving yourselves and society, making the world more human and more fraternal.

Dear young people, in these noble undertakings you are not alone. With you there are your families, there are your communities, there are your priests and teachers, there are so many of you who in the depths of your hearts never weary of loving Christ and believing in him. In the struggle against sin you are not alone: so many like you are struggling and through the Lord's grace are winning!

6. Dear friends, at the dawn of the Third Millennium I see in you the "morning watchmen" (cf. Is 21:11-12). In the course of the century now past young people like you were summoned to huge gatherings to learn the ways of hatred; they were sent to fight against one another. The various godless messianic systems which tried to take the place of Christian hope have shown themselves to be truly horrendous. Today you have come together to declare that in the new century you will not let yourselves be made into tools of violence and destruction; you will defend peace, paying the price in your person if need be. You will not resign yourselves to a world where other human beings die of hunger, remain illiterate and have no work. You will defend life at every moment of its development; you will strive with all your strength to make this earth ever more livable for all people.

Dear young people of the century now beginning, in saying "yes" to Christ, you say "yes" to all your noblest ideals. I pray that he will reign in your hearts and in all of humanity in the new century and the new millennium. Have no fear of entrusting yourselves to him! He will guide you, he will grant you the strength to follow him every day and in every situation.

May Mary most holy, the Virgin who said "yes" to God throughout her whole life, may Saints Peter and Paul and all the Saints who have lighted the Church's journey down the ages, keep you always faithful to this holy resolve!

To each and every one of you I offer my blessing with affection.

**August 20, 2000**

Closing Homily, World Youth Day

Pope John Paul II, August 20, 2000

1. "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (Jn 6:68).

Dear young people of the Fifteenth World Youth Day! These words of Peter, in his conversation with Christ at the end of the discourse on the "bread of life", affect us personally. In these days we have meditated on John's statement: "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn 1:14). The evangelist has brought us back to the great mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God, the Son given to us through Mary "when the fullness of time had come" (Gal 4:4).

In his name I greet you all once more with great affection. I greet Cardinal Camillo Ruini, my Vicar for the Diocese of Rome and President of the Italian Episcopal Conference, and I thank him for his words at the beginning of this Mass. I also greet Cardinal James Francis Stafford, President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, and the many Cardinals, Bishops and priests gathered here. With gratitude I extend respectful greetings to the President of Italy and the head of the Italian Government, as well as all the civil and religious Authorities who honour us with their presence.

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2. We have reached the high point of World Youth Day. Yesterday evening, dear young people, we confirmed our faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God whom the Father sent, as the First Reading reminded us today, "to bring good tidings to the poor, ... to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound ... to comfort all who mourn" (Is 61:1-3).

In today's Eucharistic celebration, Jesus helps us to come to know a particular aspect of his mystery. In the Gospel, we listened to a part of his discourse in the synagogue at Capernaum after the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves. In it he reveals himself as the true bread of life, the bread which has come down from heaven to give life to the world (cf. Jn 6:51). These are words that those who hear him do not understand. Their outlook is too material for them to grasp what Christ really means. They are thinking in terms of flesh, which "is of no avail" (Jn 6:63). Jesus's words, instead, have to do with the unlimited horizons of the spirit: "The words that I have spoken to you – he insists – are spirit and life" (ibid.).

But his hearers are hesitant: "This is a hard saying, who can listen to it?" (Jn 6:60). They consider themselves to be persons of common sense, with their feet on the ground. For this reason they shake their heads and go away muttering, one after another. The initial crowd gradually grows smaller. At the end, only the tiny group of his most faithful disciples remains. But with regard to the "bread of life" Jesus is not prepared to back down. Rather, he is ready to lose even those closest to him: "Will you also go away?" (Jn 6:67).

3. "Will you also?" Christ's question cuts across the centuries and comes down to us; it challenges us personally and calls for a decision. What is our answer? Dear young people, if we are here today, it is because we identify with the Apostle Peter's reply: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (Jn 6:68).

Around you, you hear all kinds of words. But only Christ speaks words that stand the test of time and remain for all eternity. The time of life that you are living calls for decisive choices on your part: decisions about the direction of your studies, about work, about your role in society and in the Church. It is important to realize that among the many questions surfacing in your minds, the decisive ones are not about "what". The basic question is "who": "who" am I to go to, "who" am I to follow, "to whom" should I entrust my life?

You are thinking about love and the choices it entails, and I imagine that you agree: what is really important in life is the choice of the person who will share it with you. But be careful! Every human person has inevitable limits: even in the most successful of marriages there is always a certain amount of disappointment. So then, dear friends, does not this confirm what we heard the Apostle Peter say? Every human being finds himself sooner or later saying what he said: "To whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life". Only Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God and of Mary, the eternal Word of the Father born two thousand years ago at Bethlehem in Judaea, is capable of satisfying the deepest aspirations of the human heart.

In Peter's question: "To whom shall we go?" the answer regarding the path to follow is already given. It is the path that leads to Christ. And it is possible to meet the divine Master personally: he is in fact truly present on the altar in the reality of his Body and Blood. In the Eucharistic Sacrifice, we can enter into contact with the person of Jesus in a way that is mysterious but real, drinking at the inexhaustible fountain that is his life as the Risen Lord.

4. This is the stupendous truth, dear friends: the Word, who took flesh two thousand years ago, is present today in the Eucharist. That is why the year of the Great Jubilee, in which we are celebrating the mystery of the Incarnation, had to be an "intensely Eucharistic" year as well (cf. *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, 55).

The Eucharist is the sacrament of the presence of Christ, who gives himself to us because he loves us. He loves each one of us in a unique and personal way in our practical daily lives: in our families, among our friends, at study and work, in rest and relaxation. He loves us when he fills our days with freshness, and also when, in times of suffering, he allows trials to weigh upon us: even in the most severe trials, he lets us hear his voice.

Yes, dear friends, Christ loves us and he loves us for ever! He loves us even when we disappoint him, when we fail to meet his expectations for us. He never fails to embrace us in his mercy. How can we not be grateful

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to this God who has redeemed us, going so far as to accept the foolishness of the Cross? To God who has come to be at our side and has stayed with us to the end?

5. To celebrate the Eucharist, “to eat his flesh and drink his blood”, means to accept the wisdom of the Cross and the path of service. It means that we signal our willingness to sacrifice ourselves for others, as Christ has done.

Our society desperately needs this sign, and young people need it even more so, tempted as they often are by the illusion of an easy and comfortable life, by drugs and pleasure-seeking, only to find themselves in a spiral of despair, meaninglessness and violence. It is urgent to change direction and to turn to Christ. This is the way of justice, solidarity and commitment to building a society and a future worthy of the human person.

This is our Eucharist, this is the answer that Christ wants from us, from you young people at the closing of your Jubilee. Jesus is no lover of half measures, and he does not hesitate to pursue us with the question: “Will you also go away?” In the presence of Christ, the Bread of Life, we too want to say today with Peter: “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” (Jn 6:68).

6. Dear friends, when you go back home, set the Eucharist at the centre of your personal life and community life: love the Eucharist, adore the Eucharist and celebrate it, especially on Sundays, the Lord’s Day. Live the Eucharist by testifying to God’s love for every person.

I entrust to you, dear friends, this greatest of God’s gifts to us who are pilgrims on the paths of time, but who bear in our hearts a thirst for eternity. May every community always have a priest to celebrate the Eucharist! I ask the Lord therefore to raise up from among you many holy vocations to the priesthood. Today as always the Church needs those who celebrate the Eucharistic Sacrifice with a pure heart. The world must not be deprived of the gentle and liberating presence of Christ living in the Eucharist!

You yourselves must be fervent witnesses to Christ’s presence on the altar. Let the Eucharist mould your life and the life of the families you will form. Let it guide all life’s choices. May the Eucharist, the true and living presence of the love of the Trinity, inspire in you ideals of solidarity, and may it lead you to live in communion with your brothers and sisters in every part of the world.

In a special way, may sharing in the Eucharist lead to a new flourishing of vocations to the religious life. In this way the Church will have fresh and generous energies for the great task of the new evangelization. If any of you, dear young men and women, hear the Lord’s inner call to give yourselves completely to him in order to love him “with an undivided heart” (cf. 1 Cor 7:34), do not be held back by doubts or fears. Say “yes” with courage and without reserve, trusting him who is faithful to his promises. Did he not assure those who had left everything for his sake that they would have a hundredfold in this life and eternal life hereafter? (cf. Mk 10:29-30).

7. At the end of this World Youth Day, as I look at you now, at your young faces, at your genuine enthusiasm, from the depths of my heart I want to give thanks to God for the gift of youth, which continues to be present in the Church and in the world because of you.

Thank God for the World Youth Days! Thanks be to God for all the young people who have been involved in them in the past sixteen years! Many of them are now adults who continue to live their faith in their homes and work-places. I am sure, dear friends, that you too will be as good as those who preceded you. You will carry the proclamation of Christ into the new millennium. When you return home, do not grow lax. Reinforce and deepen your bond with the Christian communities to which you belong. From Rome, from the City of Peter and Paul, the Pope follows you with affection and, paraphrasing Saint Catherine of Siena’s words, reminds you: “If you are what you should be, you will set the whole world ablaze!” (cf. Letter 368).

I look with confidence to this new humanity which you are now helping to prepare. I look to this Church which in every age is made youthful by the Spirit of Christ and today is made happy by your intentions and commitment. I look to the future and make my own the words of an ancient prayer, which sings the praise of the one gift of Jesus, the Eucharist and the Church:

"I give thanks to you, Father of us all,  
for the life and the knowledge  
which you have revealed to us through Jesus your servant.  
To you be glory in every age!

Just as this bread now broken  
was wheat scattered far and wide upon the hills  
and, when harvested, became one bread,  
so too let your Church be gathered into your kingdom  
from the far ends of the earth...

You, O Lord almighty, have created the universe  
to the glory of your name;  
you have given people food  
and drink for their comfort,  
so that they may give you thanks;  
but to us you have given a spiritual food and drink  
and eternal life through your Son...  
Glory be to you for ever!" (Didache 9:3-4; 10:3-4)

Amen.

**December 21, 2000**

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II  
TO THE MEMBERS OF CATHOLIC ACTION YOUTH

Thursday, 21 December 2000

1. Thank you, dear young people of Catholic Action Youth, for your traditional Christmas visit. When the ACR arrives, it means that Christmas is not far off!

You have come in pairs, like Jesus' disciples, from the different regions of Italy, accompanied by a teacher for each Diocese. I greet you with deep affection and extend a special greeting to the most senior leaders who have accompanied you.

Perhaps some of you were present at the Children's Jubilee last 2 January. That was the first important meeting of the Jubilee and I remember that Catholic Action worked very hard for the event. Now, dear young people, we are almost at the end of the Holy Year. So I ask you: how have you lived these months? Of course, in comparison with a year ago, you have grown noticeably. At your age one more year is a lot and the changes are more obvious. But can you say that you have also grown as Christians? Has your friendship with Jesus become stronger and deeper?

2. The ACR has certainly helped you to grow as disciples of Christ. With your groups you have made an even lovelier, richer and more joyful journey during this Year of the Great Jubilee which will certainly be fruitful. Together with your teachers and assistants, you have decided to become even more missionary, more capable of bringing to others the joy of having met Jesus. I am pleased with this missionary effort, and I tell you once again that I set great store by your collaboration in spreading the Gospel in families, at school, in sports activities and everywhere.

For my part, I accompany you with prayer so that, like Jesus, you may grow in wisdom and grace, before God and men. This will happen if you always love Our Lady and let her guide you. May the example of the shepherd children of Fátima, Francesco and Giacinta, whom this very year I had the joy of beatifying, show once again that children have a special bond with the Virgin Mary. With her help, they can reach the peaks of holiness.

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I would like to give you a piece of advice: go to Bethlehem and bring the newborn Jesus this membership card, the "number one". He must not be left out by the ACR and the ACR must not let him down. These are my wishes for all of you gathered here.

Happy Christmas!

Thank you again, dear friends, for your visit and for your gifts. I bless you with great affection, as well as all your friends in Catholic Action, your relatives and your teachers.

# 2001

**January 6, 2001**  
**Novo Millennio Ineunte**

Young people

9. The many Jubilee gatherings have brought together the most diverse groups of people, and the level of participation has been truly impressive — at times sorely trying the commitment of organizers and helpers, both ecclesiastical and civil. In this Letter I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone. But apart from the numbers, what has moved me so often was to note the intensity of prayer, reflection and spirit of communion which these meetings have generally showed.

And how could we fail to recall especially the joyful and inspiring gathering of young people? If there is an image of the Jubilee of the Year 2000 that more than any other will live on in memory, it is surely the streams of young people with whom I was able to engage in a sort of very special dialogue, filled with mutual affection and deep understanding. It was like this from the moment I welcomed them in the Square of Saint John Lateran and Saint Peter's Square. Then I saw them swarming through the city, happy as young people should be, but also thoughtful, eager to pray, seeking "meaning" and true friendship. Neither for them nor for those who saw them will it be easy to forget that week, during which Rome became "young with the young". It will not be possible to forget the Mass at Tor Vergata.

Yet again, the young have shown themselves to be for Rome and for the Church a special gift of the Spirit of God. Sometimes when we look at the young, with the problems and weaknesses that characterize them in contemporary society, we tend to be pessimistic. The Jubilee of Young People however changed that, telling us that young people, whatever their possible ambiguities, have a profound longing for those genuine values which find their fullness in Christ. Is not Christ the secret of true freedom and profound joy of heart? Is not Christ the supreme friend and the teacher of all genuine friendship? If Christ is presented to young people as he really is, they experience him as an answer that is convincing and they can accept his message, even when it is demanding and bears the mark of the Cross. For this reason, in response to their enthusiasm, I did not hesitate to ask them to make a radical choice of faith and life and present them with a stupendous task: to become "morning watchmen" (cf. Is 21:11-12) at the dawn of the new millennium.

**February 14, 2001**

Message for XVI World Youth Day, Pope John Paul II, February 14, 2001

"If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." (Lk 9:23)

My dear young people,

1. It is with great joy and affection that I keep this annual appointment with you, and as I write these words, my eyes and heart retain the evocative image of the great "Gateway" in the field at Tor Vergata in Rome. That evening of the 19 August last year at the start of the vigil of the 15th World Youth Day, hand in hand with five young people from the five continents, I crossed the threshold under the gaze of the crucified and risen Christ. In a way it was symbolic: I was entering into the third millennium accompanied by all of you.

Here I wish to express my most heartfelt gratitude to God for the gift of youthfulness that, through you, remains in the Church and the world (cf. Homily at Tor Vergata, 20 August 2000).

I also wish to give God fervent thanks for allowing me to accompany the youth of the world for the last two decades of the century that has just ended, showing them the way that leads to Christ, "the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb 13:8). But, at the same time, I thank God because the young people have accompanied and almost supported the Pope during his apostolic pilgrimages around the world.

What was the 15th World Youth Day if not a special time to contemplate the mystery of the Word made flesh for our salvation? Was it not a wonderful occasion to celebrate and proclaim the faith of the Church, and to make plans for renewed Christian commitment, and together to focus on the world that is waiting to hear about the Word that saves? The true fruits of the Youth Jubilee can never be calculated by statistics, but only in works of love and justice, and in everyday faithfulness, so invaluable, yet often unseen. I have entrusted to you, dear young people, and especially to all those who took part in this memorable event, the task of offering the world this consistent evangelical witness.

2. Enriched by this wonderful experience, you returned to your homes and daily lives, and now you are preparing to celebrate the 16th World Youth Day with your pastors in your dioceses.

For this occasion, I invite you to reflect on the conditions that Jesus asked of those who wanted to be his disciples: "If anyone wishes to come after me", he said, "he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Lk 9:23). Jesus is not a Messiah of triumph and power. In fact, he did not free Israel from Roman rule and he never assured it of political glory. As a true Servant of the Lord, he carried out his mission in solidarity, in service, and in the humiliation of death. He is the Messiah who did not fit into any mould and who came without fanfare, and who cannot be "understood" with the logic of success and power, the kind of logic often used by the world to verify its projects and actions.

Having come to carry out the will of the Father, Jesus remained faithful to it right to the end. He thus carried out his mission of salvation for all those who believe in him and love him, not in word, but in deed. Love is the condition for following him, but it is sacrifice that is the proof of that love (cf. Apostolic Letter *Salvifici doloris*, 17-18).

3. "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Lk 9:23). These words denote the radicality of a choice that does not allow for hesitation or second thoughts. It is a demanding requirement that unsettled even the disciples and that, throughout the ages, has held back many men and women from following Christ. But precisely this radicality has also produced admirable examples of sanctity and martyrdom that strengthened and confirmed the way of the Church. Even today these words are regarded as a stumbling block and folly (cf. 1 Cor 1: 22-25). Yet they must be faced, because the path outlined by God for his Son is the path to be undertaken by the disciple who has decided to follow Jesus. There are not two paths, but only one: the one trodden by the Master. The disciple cannot invent a different way.

Jesus walks ahead of his followers and asks each one to do as he himself has done. He says: I have not come to be served, but to serve; so, whoever wants to be like me must be the servant of everyone. I have come to you as one who possesses nothing; for this reason, I can ask you to leave all riches behind which prevent you from entering the Kingdom of Heaven. I accept denial and rejection by most of my people; therefore I can ask you to accept denial and opposition from wherever it comes.

In other words, Jesus asks that we courageously choose the same path. We have to choose it from our hearts, because external situations do not depend on us. In so far as it is possible, the will to be as obedient as he was to the Father and to be ready to accept the plan which he has for each person right to the end depends upon each of us.

4. "He must deny himself". To deny oneself is to give up one's own plans that are often small and petty in order to accept God's plan. This is the path of conversion, something indispensable in a Christian life, and that led Saint Paul to say, "it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal 2:20).

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Jesus does not ask us to give up living, but to accept a newness and a fullness of life that only He can give. The human being has a deep-rooted tendency to “think only of self”, to regard one’s own person as the centre of interest and to see oneself as the standard against which to gauge everything. One who chooses to follow Christ, on the other hand, avoids being wrapped up in himself and does not evaluate things according to self interest. He looks on life in terms of gift and gratuitousness, not in terms of conquest and possession. Life in its fullness is only lived in self-giving, and that is the fruit of the grace of Christ: an existence that is free and in communion with God and neighbour (cf. *Gaudium et spes*, 24).

If to live as a follower of the Lord becomes the highest value, then all other values are given their rightful rank and importance. Whoever depends solely on worldly goods will end up by losing, even though there might seem to be an appearance of success. Death will find that person with an abundance of possessions but having lived a wasted life (cf. Lk 12:13-21). Therefore, the choice is between being and having, between a full life and an empty existence, between truth and falsehood.

5. “Take up his cross daily and follow me”. As the cross can be reduced to being an ornament, “to carry the cross” can become just a manner of speaking. In the teaching of Jesus, however, it does not imply the pre-eminence of mortification and denial. It does not refer primarily to the need to endure patiently the great and small tribulations of life, or, even less, to the exaltation of pain as a means of pleasing God. It is not suffering for its own sake that a Christian seeks, but love. When the cross is embraced it becomes a sign of love and of total self-giving. To carry it behind Christ means to be united with him in offering the greatest proof of love.

We cannot speak about the cross without considering God’s love for us, the fact that God wishes to shower us with good things. With his invitation “follow me”, Jesus not only says again to his disciples: take me as your model, but also: share my life and my choices, and stake your life for love of God and for neighbour together with me. This is how Jesus opens up before us the “way of life”. Unfortunately, this is constantly being threatened by the “way of death”. Sin is this way that separates a person from God and neighbour and brings about division and undermines society from within.

The “way of life” continues and renews the mind of Christ in us and becomes the way of faith and conversion. It is indeed the way of the cross. It is the way that leads one to trust in him and his plan of salvation, and to believe that He died in order to show God’s love for each one. It is the way to salvation in a society often divided, confused and contradictory. It is the way to the happiness found in following Christ right to the end, in the sometimes dramatic circumstances of daily life. It is the way that does not fear failure, difficulties, isolation, loneliness, because it fills our hearts with the presence of Jesus. It is the path of peace, self-control and a joyful heart.

6. My dear young people, do not think it strange that, at the beginning of the third millennium, the Pope once again directs you towards the Cross of Christ as the path of life and true happiness. The Church has always believed and proclaimed that only in the Cross of Christ is there salvation.

There is a widespread culture of the ephemeral that only attaches value to whatever is pleasing or beautiful, and it would like us to believe that it is necessary to remove the cross in order to be happy. The ideal presented is one of instant success, a fast career, sexuality separated from any sense of responsibility, and ultimately, an existence centred on self affirmation, often bereft of respect for others.

Open your eyes and observe well, my dear young people: this is not the road that leads to true life, but it is the path that sinks into death. Jesus said: “Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.” Jesus leaves us under no illusions: “What profit is there for one to gain the whole world yet lose or forfeit himself?” (Lk 9:24-25). With the truth of his words that sound hard but fill the heart with peace, Jesus reveals the secret of how to live a true life (cf. Talk to the young people of Rome, 2 April 1998).

Therefore, do not be afraid to walk the way first trodden by the Lord. With your youthfulness, put your mark of hope and enthusiasm, so typical of your age, on the third millennium that is just beginning. If you allow the grace of God to work in you, and earnestly fulfill this commitment daily, you will make this new century a better time for everyone.

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Mary the Mother of the Lord always walks with you. She was the first of the disciples, and she remained faithful at the foot of the Cross where Christ entrusted us to her motherly care. May this Apostolic Blessing that I impart with great affection be with you always.

From the Vatican, 14 February 2001

**April 8, 2001**

HOMILY OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II

8 April 2001

1. "Hosanna!", "Crucify him!". The significance of the two events we are recalling at this Sunday's liturgy could be summed up in these words, probably shouted by the same crowd in the space of a few days.

With the acclamation "Blessed is he who comes!", in a burst of enthusiasm, the people of Jerusalem waved palm branches and greeted Jesus as he entered the city riding on an ass. With the words: "Crucify him!", shouted twice in a crescendo of fury, the multitude clamoured for the Roman governor to condemn the accused as he stood silently in the Praetorium.

Our celebration therefore begins with a "Hosanna!" and ends with a "Crucify him!". The palm of triumph and the cross of the Passion: this is not a contradiction; rather, it is the heart of the mystery that we want to proclaim. Jesus gave himself up voluntarily to the Passion; he was not crushed by forces greater than himself. He freely faced crucifixion and in death was triumphant.

By searching the Father's will, he realized that his "hour" had come and he accepted it with the free obedience of the Son and with infinite love for human beings: "When Jesus knew that this hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end" (Jn 13: 1).

2. Today we look at Jesus who is nearing the end of his life and is presented as the Messiah long awaited by the people, sent by God in his name to bring peace and salvation, although in a different way from what contemporaries were expecting.

Jesus' work of salvation and liberation continues down the centuries. That is why the Church, which firmly believes him to be present, even if invisibly, never tires of acclaiming him in her praise and adoration. Our assembly therefore proclaims once again: "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!".

3. The reading of the Gospel passage has set before our eyes the terrible scenes of Jesus' Passion: his physical and moral suffering, Judas' kiss, the disciples' desertion, the trial before Pilate, the insults and scorn, the condemnation, the sorrowful way, the crucifixion. Finally, the most mysterious suffering: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?". A loud cry, then death.

Why all this? The beginning of the Eucharistic prayer will give us the answer: "Though he was sinless, he suffered willingly for sinners. Though innocent, he accepted death to save the guilty. By his dying he has destroyed our sins. By his rising he has raised us up to holiness of life" (Preface).

Our celebration thus expresses gratitude and love to the One who sacrificed himself for us, to the Servant of God who, as the prophet said, was not rebellious, did not turn backwards, gave his back to the smiters and did not hide his face from shame and spitting (cf. Is 50: 4-7).

4. However, in reading the account of the Passion, the Church does not only consider Jesus' sufferings; she approaches this mystery, trembling yet confident, knowing that her Lord is risen. The light of Easter reveals the great teaching contained in the Passion: life is affirmed through the sincere gift of self to the point of suffering death for others, for the Other.

Jesus did not understand his earthly existence as a search for power, as a race for success or a career, as a desire to dominate others. On the contrary, he gave up the privileges of his equality with God, took the

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form of a servant, became like men and was obedient to the Father's plan unto death on the cross. Thus he left his disciples and the Church a valuable lesson: "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (Jn 12: 24).

5. For some years now Palm Sunday has become World Youth Day, your Day, dear young people who have come here from the various parishes of the Diocese of Rome and from other parts of the world: together with you, I also greet with affection and hope your peers who today, in the various local Churches, are celebrating the 16th World Youth Day, the first of the new millennium.

I particularly greet the young people of the Canadian Delegation, led by Cardinal Ambrozic, Archbishop of Toronto, who are here with us to receive the Cross around which all the young people from every continent will gather on the next World Youth Day in 2002. Once again I forcefully point out to each and every one the Cross of Christ as the path of life and salvation, the way that leads to the palm of triumph on the day of resurrection.

What do we see on the Cross standing before us, which for 2,000 years the world has not ceased to question and the Church to contemplate? We see Jesus, the Son of God who became man in order to restore man to God. He who is without sin is now crucified before us. He is free, despite being nailed to the wood. He is innocent, even under the inscription stating the reason for his sentence. None of his bones were broken (cf. Ps 34: 21), because he is the supporting column of a new world. His tunic was not torn (cf. Jn 19: 24), because the body of the Lord of life, who conquered death, cannot undergo corruption.

6. Dear young people, Jesus died and is risen; he now lives for ever! He gave his life. But no one took it from him; he gave it "for us" (Jn 10: 18). Life came to us through his cross. Through his death and resurrection the Gospel triumphed and the Church was born.

As we confidently enter the new century and the new millennium, dear young people, the Pope repeats to you the words of the Apostle Paul: "If we have died with Jesus, we shall also live with him; if we endure, we shall also reign with him" (2 Tm 2: 11). For Jesus alone is the Way, and the Truth, and the Life (cf. Jn 14: 6).

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? The Apostle has also given us the answer: "I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 8: 38-39).

Praise and glory to you, O Christ, Word of God, Saviour of the world!

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Before the conclusion, young people from Rome handed over the World Youth Day Cross to their Canadian peers in preparation for the next World Youth Day, to be held in Toronto in 2002. The Holy Father greeted the many young people participating in the liturgy before giving the final blessing:

As is now our happy tradition, in a few moments Italian young people will hand over the Youth Day Cross to their Canadian peers, who will host the 17th World Youth Day in their country during the summer of next year. Its theme will be: "You are the salt of the earth ... you are the light of the world" (Mt 5: 13-14). Once again the Cross continues its pilgrimage on the highways of the world with the young generations, who enter the new millennium carrying and following the sign of Christ who died and rose again, the victor over evil and death.

I greet the young Canadians present, led by the Archbishop of Toronto, Cardinal Ambrozic, and to them I entrust the Cross. I encourage you to prepare well for the next important appointment of World Youth Day, which has as its theme "You are the salt of the earth ... you are the light of the world" (Mt 5: 13-14). Dear young people, get ready to welcome the young people of the world to your beautiful country by renewing your own fidelity to Christ the Lord. Fidelity to Christ, this is my invitation to all the English-speaking pilgrims. Until we meet in Toronto!

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I affectionately greet the French pilgrims who have taken part in the Palm Sunday liturgy, and most especially the young people of Canada. Dear young friends, may the 17th World Youth Day be an auspicious occasion for deepening your faith and your life with Christ, as well as for bearing a renewed witness to your love and to the joyful, worldwide openness of your heart! My prayer accompanies you, with my affectionate Apostolic Blessing.

I cordially greet the German-speaking pilgrims, especially the young Christians. Dear young friends, this morning you sang "Hosanna" to the Lord. Make Jesus Christ your traveling companion, and let yourselves be led by him to World Youth Day, which will take place during the summer of next year in Toronto. If you take the Crucified and Risen One as your guide, you will always be blessed.

"You are the salt of the earth ... you are the light of the world". With these words, the theme of the next World Youth Day in Toronto, I address all the Spanish-speaking young people. Take this joyful yet demanding message to all your companions. You can count on my prayers and closeness in this great adventure of evangelization.

Dear Portuguese-speaking young people, witnesses to the handing over of the Cross to your peers from Canada, my cordial greetings to you, your families and your ecclesial groups. I wish you all great solidarity of heart and life close to the crosses of so many crucified people.

May the Cross that we are handing over today to the young people from Toronto also be a light for you on your way through life. On this occasion, I recall the World Youth Day at Jasna Góra in Czestochowa, which marked a turning point. I ask you always to keep alive that great event experienced years ago, and at the same time to keep on moving towards the future, just as the World Youth Days move from one place to another, from one country to another, from one continent to another, from the second to the third millennium. God bless you!

**May 7, 2001**

ADDRESS TO YOUNG PEOPLE IN DAMASCUS

Pope John Paul II

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BE FAITHFUL WITNESSES TO THE INCARNATE WORD OF LIFE. BUILD THE CIVILIZATION OF LOVE

On Monday evening, 7 May, in the Melkite Greek Catholic Cathedral of the Dormition of Our Lady, the Holy Father met with young people for a session of prayer and personal witness. In the French-language address he said: "Christ is calling you and awakening in you a desire to make your life something magnificent and beautiful". Here is the English translation of the address.

My Dear Friends,

When the Cardinals elected me to the Chair of St Peter, I spoke to young people and said: "You are my hope, the hope of the Church".

After 23 years, I repeat with great conviction: you are my hope, the hope of the Church! Today I add: you are the hope of Syria!

The hope of peace, of unity, of the civilization of love, you are the hope.

Dear Young People,

1. "Peace be with you!" I greet you this evening with the Easter greeting of the Risen Lord to his disciples. I am happy to meet you at the conclusion of my pilgrimage in the footsteps of the Apostle Paul in Syria. I thank the young people who welcomed me in your name. Although you belong to a variety of Christian confessions, all of you wish to listen to the voice of the one Lord and to journey together towards him. May your presence here be a sign of your commitment to work together, with Christ's grace, in promoting full visible unity between all Christians!

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I cordially greet His Beatitude Patriarch Gregoire III and I thank him for welcoming me in the name of the Bishops of the Greek-Melkite Patriarchate of Antioch. In this Cathedral I also greet with fraternal affection the venerable Patriarch Maximos Hakim, who joins us in prayer from his residence in Beirut.

2. The passage of the Letter to Timothy which we have just heard is a source of encouragement for you: "If we have died with him, we shall also live with him. If we hold out to the end, we shall also reign with him. But if we deny him, he will deny us. If we are unfaithful, he will remain faithful, for he cannot deny himself" (2 Tim 2:11-13).

Dear young people, you are going through a time of life filled with questions and uncertainties. Yet Christ is calling you and awakening in you a desire to make your life something magnificent and beautiful, a determination to pursue high ideals, a refusal to be satisfied with mediocrity, and the courage to make commitments, with patience and perseverance.

3. In order to be able to respond to this call, strive constantly to grow in closeness to the Lord of life. Remain faithfully in his presence through prayer, knowledge of the Scriptures, the celebration of the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In this way you will build yourselves up and strengthen what the Apostle Paul calls "your inner self". An intimate relationship with the Lord is also the secret behind a fruitful life, a life grounded in what is essential for every human being: namely, dialogue with God, our Creator and our Saviour. In this way, your life will not be superficial, but profoundly rooted in the spiritual, moral and human values which sustain our whole being and our whole existence. Remember that you cannot be a Christian if you reject the Church founded on Jesus Christ; you cannot be called believers unless you put your faith into practice; and you cannot call yourselves spiritual men and women unless you allow yourselves to be moulded by God, in humble and joyful openness to his Spirit and in docility to his will. Your life's centre of gravity must be in God.

Only then you will be able to make choices and to undertake generous commitments. Today you may be asking questions like: "What road should I take?", "What should I do with my life?", "Whom should I follow?". Don't be afraid to take time to reflect with older people, in order to consider seriously the choices you have to make, choices which involve listening to Jesus Christ as he invites you to follow him along the demanding path of a courageous witness to values worth living for and worth giving your lives for: values such as truth, faith, human dignity, unity, peace and love. With the help of Christ and his Church, you will develop each day into men and women who are free and responsible for their own lives, actively involved in the life of their Church, in strengthening relationships between their religious and social communities, and in building an ever more just and fraternal society.

4. The Lord Jesus asks his disciples to be signs in the midst of the world, visible and credible agents of his saving presence wherever they live and work. It is

6. Dear young people, the future of Christianity in your country depends on better relations and closer cooperation between the Churches and Ecclesial Communities present here. You know this and you are already working on it. The fellowship which you are happily experiencing in everyday life, in your neighbourhoods, in your schools or training centres, and in your groups or your youth activities, is important to you. It is preparing you even now to contemplate together your future as Christians in Syria. Strengthen the things that unite you. Meditate together on the Gospel, call upon the Holy Spirit, listen to the testimony of the Apostles, pray with joy and thanksgiving. Love your ecclesial communities. They have handed on to you the faith and the testimony for which your forefathers often paid a high price. They are counting on your courage and your holiness, which are the foundation of all true reconciliation. May the prayer of Christ "that all may be one" always resound in your hearts as an invitation and a promise! Your country is marked by fellowship between all parts of society. I highly esteem this fraternal and peaceful fellowship, and I express my hope that everyone will feel a real part of the community and be able to make their own contribution, in freedom, to the common good.

Dear young people, having discovered God, you must now offer him to the world. The "logic" of Christianity is truly unique! No one can keep this gift unless he also gives it away. This is the same "logic" which we have seen in the life of divine Master, who humbled himself, even to making the supreme sacrifice. That is why he was raised up and given the Name which is above every other name (cf. Phil 2:5-11). The true fruitfulness of every human life is linked to this radical experience of the mystery of the Passion and the Resurrection.

7. Tonight, with your Patriarchs and your Bishops, your priests and the whole Church, I say to you once again: Wherever you are, be faithful witnesses to the Incarnate Word of life! Your presence and readiness to help in your parishes and ecclesial movements, your fraternal concern for those suffering in body and spirit, your involvement in the building of a society which respects the rights of all and promotes the common good and peace: these are your commitments because you belong to Christ and are determined to serve humanity. Dear young Christians, bear witness to "the Gospel of charity"! Dear young people of Syria: build "the civilization of love"! I say this with great hope and immense confidence.

8. To you I renew the challenge which I addressed to the young people of the world on the occasion of the Great Jubilee: "Do not be afraid to be the saints of the new millennium! ... With Christ, holiness – the divine plan for every baptized person – becomes possible [...]. Jesus walks with you, he renews your heart and strengthens you with the vigour of his Spirit" (Message for the Fifteenth World Youth Day, No. 3).

With great affection I bless all of you and your families.

**June 26, 2001**

MEETING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER

Lviv (Sykhiv Square)

Tuesday, 26 June 2001

SENTINELS OF A NEW DAWN OF HOPE

Go against the current: freedom is demanding... more costly than slavery

On Tuesday afternoon, 26 June, in Lviv, in Sykhiv Square in front of the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Holy Father met with about 400,000 young persons whose contagious enthusiasm overcame both the severe rain storm that broke over the esplanade and the Pope's fatigue. At one point the rejuvenated Pope, who refused to shorten the event, broke into a few Polish folk songs. His message for the future of the Church and the country was clear: "Go against the current" and he cautioned them that "freedom is demanding... more costly than slavery." The Holy Father held up the Ten Commandments, lived in faith and love, as the compass of their lives. The Holy Father said about the word of God: "When God speaks, his words give life, they call things into existence, they direct our journey, they restore disappointed and broken hearts and pour fresh hope into them". He went on to freedom guided by the Ten Commandments as the compass in stormy seas: "Moses undertook the exodus from slavery in Egypt to the

freedom of the Promised Land. At the centre of the exodus is the Sinai covenant, based on the ten words of God: The Decalogue, the Ten Commandments. These are 'words of eternal life', because they are always valid and because they give life to those who observe them. The Decalogue is like a compass in a stormy sea which enables us to keep on course and reach land. This is why today I wish to present the commandments of the Decalogue to you anew, young people of Ukraine, in a symbolic way, so that they will be your 'compass'. Here is a translation of the Holy Father's address delivered in Ukrainian.

1. "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (Jn 6:68).

Dear young people of Ukraine, the Apostle Peter spoke these words to Jesus, who had presented himself to the crowds as the bread come down from heaven to give life to men (cf. Jn 6:58). Today I have the joy of repeating these words in your presence, indeed of repeating them in your name and together with you.

Today Christ asks you the same question that he asked the Apostles: "Will you also go away?". And you, young people of Ukraine, how do you reply? I am sure that with me you too will make your own the words of Peter: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life".

Seeing so many of you, and so enthusiastic, my thoughts go back to the World Youth Day which took place in Rome in August last year and at which many of you were present. There I invited the young people of the whole world to open a great "school of faith", a place in which to search for and examine more deeply the reasons for following Christ the Saviour. Today we are experiencing a significant moment of the "school of faith" here in your land, where the proclamation of the Gospel arrived more than a thousand years ago.

Once again, at the beginning of the third millennium, Christ asks you: "Who do you say that I am?" (Mt 16:15). Dear young people, the Pope has come among you to encourage you to answer: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mt 16:16); "You have the words of eternal life" (Jn 6:68).

2. Yes, dear young people, Christ has the "words of eternal life". His words last for ever and above all they open for us the gates of eternal life. When God speaks, his words give life, they call things into existence, they direct our journey, they restore disappointed and broken hearts and pour fresh hope into them.

Reading the Bible, we discover right from the first page that God speaks to us. He speaks to us as he gives life to creation: the heavens, the earth, light, water, living things, man and woman, everything exists by his word. His word gives meaning to all things, rescuing them from chaos. For this reason nature is an immense book in which we can see with ever fresh wonder the traces of divine Beauty.

Even more than in creation, God speaks in the story of humanity. He reveals his presence in world events, by beginning time after time a dialogue with men and women created in his image, in order to establish with each one of them a communion of life and love. History becomes a journey in which the Creator and the individual come to know each other, a dialogue of which the ultimate purpose is to lead us out of the slavery of sin to the freedom of love.

3. Dear young people, when lived in this way, history becomes a path to freedom. Do you wish to travel this path? Do you too wish to be part of this adventure? The future of Ukraine and of the Church in this country depends also on your reply. You are not alone on this journey. You are part of a great people of believers who look back to an ancient Patriarch, Abraham. He listened to the call of the Lord and set out, becoming our "father in faith", because he believed and trusted the Lord who promised him land and descendants.

From Abraham's faith came the chosen people, who under the guidance of Moses undertook the exodus from slavery in Egypt to the freedom of the Promised Land. At the centre of the exodus is the Sinai covenant, based on the ten words of God: the "Decalogue", the "Ten Commandments". These are "words of eternal life", because they are always valid, and because they give life to those who observe them.

4. Dear friends! One day a young man, who was very rich, asked Jesus: "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?" (Mt 19:16). And Jesus replied: "If you would enter life, keep the commandments" (Mt 19:17). Christ did not come to abolish the first covenant but to bring it to fulfilment. The Ten Commandments have permanent value, because they are the fundamental law of humanity, written in the conscience of

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every person. They are the first step to freedom and eternal life, because by observing them man places himself in the right relationship with God and neighbour. They "make explicit the response of love that man is called to give to his God" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2083). This law is written naturally in the heart of every human person and is to be faithfully accepted and carried out. It should become the rule of our daily life.

In today's world we see profound and rapid social changes and many moral points of reference have become shaky, throwing people into confusion and sometimes despair. The Decalogue is like a compass in a stormy sea which enables us to keep on course and reach land. This is why today I wish to present the commandments of the Decalogue to you anew, young people of Ukraine, in a symbolic way, so that they will be your "compass", the solid point of reference for building your present and your future.

5. "You shall love the Lord your God." We must give God the first place in our lives. For this reason the first three commandments are concerned with our relationship with him. He rightly deserves to be loved with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our strength (cf. Dt 6:5). God is one, and he is not to be exchanged for false gods. To you too, dear young people, he says: "I am the Lord your God, I wish to lead you into the fullness of life: do not put something else in my place".

The pressure is strong today to replace the true God with false gods and deceptive aims. Material things are today's idols. If they are sought and used as means and instruments of good, they are a help to us. However, they should never occupy the first place in man's heart, even less in the heart of young people, who are called to fly high, towards the most beautiful and most noble ideals!

The name of God is Father, Love, Faithfulness, Mercy. How can we fail to desire that everyone should know and love him? His day – the Sabbath, which for us Christians became Sunday, the day of the Lord's Resurrection – is an anticipation of the Promised Land. How can we fail not to make it holy by taking part in the Eucharist, the festive meeting of the Christian community?

6. "Love your neighbour." The other seven commandments refer to our relations with our neighbours. They show us the path which enables us to establish relationships with other human beings marked by respect and love, based on truth and justice.

Those who put this divine law into practice often find themselves going against the current. Young people of Ukraine, Christ asks you to go against the current! He asks you to be defenders of his law and to put it into practice in proper behaviour in daily life. This ancient and ever valid law finds its perfect fulfilment in the Gospel. It is love that animates our lives, and it is to true, free and profound love that faithful observance of the ten commandments leads. With this divine law solidly rooted in your hearts, do not be afraid: you will fulfil yourselves and contribute to the building of a world marked by greater solidarity and justice.

7. Dear young people, your country is going through a difficult and complex transition from the totalitarian regime which oppressed it for so many years to a society at last free and democratic. Freedom however needs strong, responsible and mature consciences. Freedom is demanding, and in a sense is more costly than slavery!

For this reason, as I embrace you like a father, I say to you: choose the narrow path that the Lord is showing you through his commandments. They are words of truth and life. The path that often seems wide and easy later shows itself to be deceptive and false. Do not go from the slavery of the Communist regime to the slavery of consumerism, another form of materialism which, without explicitly rejecting God, actually does deny him by excluding him from life.

Without God you will not be able to do anything good. With his help, however, you will be able to face all the challenges of the present moment. You will succeed in making demanding choices, against the current, as for example the decision to stay confidently in your own country, without giving in to the illusions of an easy life abroad. You are needed here, young people, ready to make your contribution to improving the social, cultural, economic and political situation of your own country. Here the talents in which you are rich are needed for the future of your land, which has such a glorious history behind it.

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The future of Ukraine depends in large part on you and the responsibilities that you will undertake. God will not fail to bless your efforts, if you commit your lives to generous service to family and society, placing the common good before private interests. Ukraine needs men and women dedicated to serving society, having as their aim the promotion of the rights and well-being of all, especially the weakest and most deprived. This is the logic of the Gospel, but it is also the logic that makes the civil community grow. True civilization, in fact, is measured not by economic progress alone but also and mainly by the human, moral and spiritual progress of a people.

8. Dear young people! I thank God who has given me the joy of meeting you! Before leaving you, I wish to add a final word: love the Church! She is your family and the spiritual building of which you are called to be the living stones. She has a particularly fascinating appearance here on account of the different traditions which enrich her. In a spirit of brotherhood, go on your way and grow in unity as you are today, so that the different traditions will not be a reason for division but rather an encouragement towards mutual knowledge and esteem.

May the Virgin Mary, who is so greatly venerated here in the land of Ukraine, accompany you on this journey. Love her and listen to her. She will teach you to make a sincere and generous gift of yourselves to God and to others. She will inspire you to seek in Christ the fullness of life and joy. In this way you will be in the Church the new generation of saints of your land, faithful to God and man, apostles of the Gospel, above all among your own contemporaries.

Let your spiritual food be the Eucharistic Bread, Christ himself! Strengthened by him in the Eucharist, you will remain always in his love and you will bear much fruit. And if the path will sometimes be steep, if the path of faithfulness to the Gospel will appear too demanding, because it will certainly require sacrifice and courageous decisions, remember our meeting. In this way you will be able to relive the enthusiasm of the profession of faith that we have made together today: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." Repeat it and do not fear! Christ will be your strength and your joy.

Thank you, dear friends! The Pope loves you and sees you as the sentinels of a new dawn of hope. He praises God for your generosity, while he prays for you with affection and with all his heart he blesses you.

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The Holy Father then greeted the young people from Russia and Poland:

I am pleased to greet the young people who have come from Russia. Dear friends, thank you for your presence! When you go back home, take your relatives and friends my greeting and witness to the joy of the meeting with your fidelity to Christ. Bring my blessing to everyone.

Dear young friends, you are here, with the community of your peers, to meet the Pope and hear what he has to tell you. So I would like to say what I said to the whole Church at the end of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000: *Duc in altum!* Put out into the deep! Do not give into despair which can be caused by the crisis of social relations, by your own failures in the search for the meaning of daily life or by any other conditioning of the contemporary world. Never lose sight of Christ! Fix his Face in your mind - the Face of the Son of God incarnate, the Teacher, the Healer, the suffering Servant of the Lord, of the risen Lord. See in his eyes how he loves you! Do not be afraid of this love! Do not be afraid to respond to it with sincere young love! May this love shape your world, your personality and your human relations! With Christ, put out into the deep of your own humanity! Never lose hope! Fidelity to his call will bear blessed fruit in your lives.

Dear young people! Remember the martyrs. Remember what a high price your grandparents and parents paid to keep their fidelity to Christ and to the Church. May their faith, hope and charity bear fruit in your hearts.

I ask you to take my greetings to your families, your schools, your workplaces. Take them to your peers. I carry you all in my heart and embrace you with my prayer. I pray God that you will be the generation to lay solid foundations under the building of the faith of the generations in the third millennium. God bless you!

**July 25, 2001**

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MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER  
TO THE YOUTH OF THE WORLD  
ON THE OCCASION  
OF THE XVII WORLD YOUTH DAY  
(TORONTO 18-28 JULY 2002)

"You are the salt of the earth...  
You are the light of the world" (Mt 5:13-14)

Dear Young People!

1. I have vivid memories of the wonderful moments we shared in Rome during the Jubilee of the Year 2000, when you came on pilgrimage to the Tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul. In long silent lines you passed through the Holy Door and prepared to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation; then the Evening Vigil and Morning Mass at Tor Vergata were moments of intense spirituality and a deep experience of the Church; with renewed faith, you went home to undertake the mission I entrusted to you: to become, at the dawn of the new millennium, fearless witnesses to the Gospel.

By now World Youth Day has become an important part of your life and of the life of the Church. I invite you therefore to get ready for the seventeenth celebration of this great international event, to be held in Toronto, Canada, in the summer of next year. It will be another chance to meet Christ, to bear witness to his presence in today's society, and to become builders of the "civilization of love and truth".

2. "You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world" (Mt 5:13-14): this is the theme I have chosen for the next World Youth Day. The images of salt and light used by Jesus are rich in meaning and complement each other. In ancient times, salt and light were seen as essential elements of life.

"You are the salt of the earth...". One of the main functions of salt is to season food, to give it taste and flavour. This image reminds us that, through Baptism, our whole being has been profoundly changed, because it has been "seasoned" with the new life which comes from Christ (cf. Rom 6:4). The salt which keeps our Christian identity intact even in a very secularized world is the grace of Baptism. Through Baptism we are re-born. We begin to live in Christ and become capable of responding to his call to "offer [our] bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God" (Rom 12:1). Writing to the Christians of Rome, Saint Paul urges them to show clearly that their way of living and thinking was different from that of their contemporaries: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect" (Rom 12:2).

For a long time, salt was also used to preserve food. As the salt of the earth, you are called to preserve the faith which you have received and to pass it on intact to others. Your generation is being challenged in a special way to keep safe the deposit of faith (cf. 2 Th 2:15; 1 Tim 6:20; 2 Tim 1:14).

Discover your Christian roots, learn about the Church's history, deepen your knowledge of the spiritual heritage which has been passed on to you, follow in the footsteps of the witnesses and teachers who have gone before you! Only by staying faithful to God's commandments, to the Covenant which Christ sealed with his blood poured out on the Cross, will you be the apostles and witnesses of the new millennium.

It is the nature of human beings, and especially youth, to seek the Absolute, the meaning and fullness of life. Dear young people, do not be content with anything less than the highest ideals! Do not let yourselves be dispirited by those who are disillusioned with life and have grown deaf to the deepest and most authentic desires of their heart. You are right to be disappointed with hollow entertainment and passing fads, and with aiming at too little in life. If you have an ardent desire for the Lord you will steer clear of the mediocrity and conformism so widespread in our society.

3. "You are the light of the world...". For those who first heard Jesus, as for us, the symbol of light evokes the desire for truth and the thirst for the fullness of knowledge which are imprinted deep within every human being.



When the light fades or vanishes altogether, we no longer see things as they really are. In the heart of the night we can feel frightened and insecure, and we impatiently await the coming of the light of dawn. Dear young people, it is up to you to be the watchmen of the morning (cf. Is 21:11-12) who announce the coming of the sun who is the Risen Christ!

The light which Jesus speaks of in the Gospel is the light of faith, God's free gift, which enlightens the heart and clarifies the mind. "It is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness', who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God on the face of Christ" (2 Cor 4:6). That is why the words of Jesus explaining his identity and his mission are so important: "I am the light of the world; whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (Jn 8:12).

Our personal encounter with Christ bathes life in new light, sets us on the right path, and sends us out to be his witnesses. This new way of looking at the world and at people, which comes to us from him, leads us more deeply into the mystery of faith, which is not just a collection of theoretical assertions to be accepted and approved by the mind, but an experience to be had, a truth to be lived, the salt and light of all reality (cf. *Veritatis Splendor*, 88).

In this secularized age, when many of our contemporaries think and act as if God did not exist or are attracted to irrational forms of religion, it is you, dear young people, who must show that faith is a personal decision which involves your whole life. Let the Gospel be the measure and guide of life's decisions and plans! Then you will be missionaries in all that you do and say, and wherever you work and live you will be signs of God's love, credible witnesses to the loving presence of Jesus Christ. Never forget: "No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a bushel" (Mt 5:15)!

Just as salt gives flavour to food and light illumines the darkness, so too holiness gives full meaning to life and makes it reflect God's glory. How many saints, especially young saints, can we count in the Church's history! In their love for God their heroic virtues shone before the world, and so they became models of life which the Church has held up for imitation by all. Let us remember only a few of them: Agnes of Rome, Andrew of Phú Yên, Pedro Calungsod, Josephine Bakhita, Thérèse of Lisieux, Pier Giorgio Frassati, Marcel Callo, Francisco Castelló Aleu or again Kateri Tekakwitha, the young Iroquois called "the Lily of the Mohawks". Through the intercession of this great host of witnesses, may God make you too, dear young people, the saints of the third millennium!

4. Dear friends, it is time to get ready for the Seventeenth World Youth Day. I invite you to read and study the Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, which I wrote at the beginning of the year to accompany all Christians on this new stage of the life of the Church and humanity: "A new century, a new millennium are opening in the light of Christ. But not everyone can see this light. Ours is the wonderful and demanding task of becoming its 'reflection'" (No. 54).

Yes, now is the time for mission! In your Dioceses and parishes, in your movements, associations and communities, Christ is calling you. The Church welcomes you and wishes to be your home and your school of communion and prayer. Study the Word of God and let it enlighten your minds and hearts. Draw strength from the sacramental grace of Reconciliation and the Eucharist. Visit the Lord in that "heart to heart" contact that is Eucharistic Adoration. Day after day, you will receive new energy to help you to bring comfort to the suffering and peace to the world. Many people are wounded by life: they are excluded from economic progress, and are without a home, a family, a job; there are people who are lost in a world of false illusions, or have abandoned all hope. By contemplating the light radiant on the face of the Risen Christ, you will learn to live as "children of the light and children of the day" (1 Th 5:5), and in this way you will show that "the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true" (Eph 5:9).

5. Dear young friends, Toronto is waiting for all of you who can make it! In the heart of a multi-cultural and multi-faith city, we shall speak of Christ as the one Saviour and proclaim the universal salvation of which the Church is the sacrament. In response to the pressing invitation of the Lord who ardently desires "that all may be one" (Jn 17:11), we shall pray for full communion among Christians in truth and charity.

Come, and make the great avenues of Toronto resound with the joyful tidings that Christ loves every person and brings to fulfilment every trace of goodness, beauty and truth found in the city of man. Come, and tell

the world of the happiness you have found in meeting Jesus Christ, of your desire to know him better, of how you are committed to proclaiming the Gospel of salvation to the ends of the earth!

The young people of Canada, together with their Bishops and the civil authorities, are already preparing to welcome you with great warmth and hospitality. For this I thank them all from my heart. May this first World Youth Day of the new millennium bring to everyone a message of faith, hope and love!

My blessing goes with you. And to Mary Mother of the Church I entrust each one of you, your vocation and your mission.

From Castel Gandolfo, 25 July 2001

**August 13, 2001**

MESSAGE OF JOHN PAUL II  
TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE  
GATHERED AT CZE\_STOCHOWA (POLAND)  
TO COMMEMORATE THE 10th ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE 6th WORLD YOUTH DAY

Dear Young Friends,

During these days I am going in spirit on pilgrimage with you to Czestochowa, to Jasna Góra. I kneel devoutly at the foot of the Black Madonna beside each one of you. I entrust each one of you to her motherly heart.

I do so just as I did 10 years ago when, during the unforgettable Sixth World Youth Day, Jasna Góra experienced a new siege. It was besieged by thousands of young people from all over the world - from the West and, for the first time, from the East. They came to confess unanimously from the depths of their hearts: Maria, Regina Mundi! Maria, Mater Ecclesiae! Tibi adsumus!

Mary, Queen of the World! Mary, Mother of the Church! We are close to you, we remember you, we are keeping watch with you! This threefold profession, which contains so to speak the mystery of Christianity and determines the whole reality of the life of faith, accompanied us in a special way during those days. Today we must return to it.

"I Am": this is God's name. Since the time of Abraham, God has not ceased to reveal this name, which is the foundation of the Old and New Covenants. This name does not only mean God's eternal existence, but also his presence, full of love - a presence with man, in the midst of his everyday events. "I am" was manifest once and for all in the Cross of Christ. "The divine 'I AM' of the Covenant - of the Paschal Mystery - of the Eucharist". This is why, 10 years ago, the young people gathered at the foot of Jasna Góra, erected the cross in the midst of the assembly. They wanted to remember this "I Am", which contains in itself the "I am" of every human being. This is so because "the human person is created in the image and likeness of God, and can say to his Creator 'I am'. This human "I am" includes the truth of being and conscience. "I am" before You, who "Are". Permit me to recall the words, which I addressed to the young people at that meeting and which today seem even more timely: "The world around you, modern civilization, has influenced many to remove that divine "I Am" from man's consciousness. It tries to live as if God did not exist.

This is its plan. But if God does not exist, you, human person, can you really exist? You have come here, dear friends, to renew and confirm in its very depths your human identity: "I am", in front of the "I AM" of God. Look at the cross upon which the divine "I am" means "Love". Look at the cross and do not forget! May the "I am near you" be the cornerstone of your whole life".

"I remember". "Man exists before God, he remains near God through the act of remembering. In this way he preserves the words of God and the great works of God, meditating on them in his heart like Mary of Nazareth". To be alive, this memory must continually return to the sources, to the words and events through which God revealed and brought about his plan of salvation. The truth about the love of God for man, written in the pages of the Bible, should not be forgotten! Young people knew this 10 years ago, and for this

reason they have returned to Jasna Góra with the book of Sacred Scripture. Take up this sacred Book too, young people of the third millennium, never cease to be in close contact with the Gospel, with the word of the living God. Know Christ always better, in order to know yourselves better and to understand what your vocation and your dignity are.

"I keep watch". "Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation" (Mk 14,34). How often Christ repeated this exhortation! I am watchful - "it means: I am obliged to be a person of conscience. I do not stifle this conscience and I do not distort it; I call good and evil by name, I do not confuse them; I have increased the good in me and tried to correct the bad, overcoming it in myself". I keep watch - this also means: I see the other person, make my eyes and my heart sensitive to his material and spiritual needs, and seek to know him with love.

When 10 years ago the young people from various countries, backgrounds and cultures meditated on what the word "watchful" meant to the believer, and sought a common model for reference, their insight rightly brought them towards the mother. "I keep watch" in fact expresses the mother's attitude.

"Her life and her vocation are expressed in being watchful. She keeps watch over men and women from the first moments of their existence". This is why, beside the Cross and the Bible, the young people set up another eloquent symbol: the icon of the Mother of God. They wanted the icon of Mary to represent, during World Youth Day, this special maternal watchfulness that accompanied the coming into the world of the Son of God and his agony on Golgotha, as well as the birth of the Church on the day of Pentecost. They wanted the image of the watchful Mother to be deeply engraved in their minds and hearts, and to form their lives. Today too, standing before the Icon of Jasna Góra, look at Mary's eyes, read in their depths the perfect purity of heart, a peace of conscience that is undisturbed, thanks to an ever faithful love. May this look remain in your souls. May it always teach you what "I keep watch" means.

With the memory of the celebration of youth at Czestochowa, which we lived in joy and in deep prayer 10 years ago, I extend my cordial greetings to you - dear friends - and invite you to the future meetings of the great international community of Christ's young witnesses. I believe that these meetings will shape the personal life of each and every one of you, and will also help to ensure that the world of the new millennium is more human, serene and peaceful.

Once again I entrust you, your parents, your pastors and all Polish young people to the protection of Our Lady of Jasna Góra. I bless you with all my heart.

From Castel Gandolfo, 13 August 2001

JOHN PAUL II

**September 23, 2001**

MEETING WITH YOUTH OF KAZAKHSTAN

Pope John Paul II

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Allow me to profess before you with humility and pride the faith of Christians

On Sunday, 23 September, in the auditorium of the Eurasia University in the capital city, Astana, at 7 in the evening, the Holy Father met with 640 young people and delivered the following address.

The Holy Father mandated them to build a culture of unity and accord between peoples. He also urged them to live a spiritual life that would fill their restless hearts: "Realize that each one of you is of unique worth, and be ready to accept one another with your respective convictions as you search together for the fullness of truth. Your country has experienced the deadly violence of ideology. Do not let yourselves fall prey now to the no less destructive violence of 'emptiness'. What a suffocating void it is when nothing matters in life, when you believe in nothing!".

The Pope revealed the ultimate objective of his visit to Kazakhstan.

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"Allow me to profess before you with humility and pride the faith of Christians: Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God made man two thousand years ago, came to reveal to us this truth through his person and his teaching. Only in the encounter with him, the Word made flesh, do we find the fullness of self-realization and happiness. Religion itself, without the experience of wondrous discovery of the Son of God and communion with him who became our brother, becomes a mere set of principles which are increasingly difficult to understand, and rules which are increasingly hard to accept".

Dear Young People!

1. It is a great joy for me to meet with you, and I am deeply grateful for your warm welcome. I greet especially the Rector and the academic authorities of this new and already prestigious University. Its very name, Eurasia, indicates the particular mission which it has in common with your great nation which is a point of contact between Europe and Asia: a mission of linking two continents, their respective cultures and traditions, and the different ethnic groups who have mingled here through the centuries.

Indeed, yours is a country in which the world can see accord and harmony between different peoples as an eloquent sign of the vocation of all peoples to live together in peace, in mutual knowledge and openness, and an ever deeper discovery and appreciation of the distinctive traditions of each people. Kazakhstan is a land of encounter, exchange and newness; a land which stirs in everyone the desire for new discoveries and makes it possible to experience difference not as a threat but as an enrichment.

Recognizing this, dear young people, I greet each one of you. To all of you I say as a friend: peace be with you, may peace fill your hearts! Know that you are called to be the builders of a better world. Be peace-makers, because a society solidly based on peace is a society with a future.

2. In preparing this visit, I asked myself what the young people of Kazakhstan would want to hear from the Pope of Rome and what would they like to ask him. My experience of young people tells me that they are interested in the basic questions. Probably the first question you would want to put to me is this: "Who am I, Pope John Paul II, according to the Gospel that you proclaim? What is the meaning of my life? Where am I going?" My answer, dear young people, is simple but hugely significant: You are a thought of God, you are a heart-beat of God. To say this is like saying that you have a value which in a sense is infinite, that you matter to God in your completely unique individuality.

You understand then, dear young people, why I come among you this evening with respect and trepidation, and why I look to you with great affection and confidence. I am happy to meet you, the descendants of the noble Kazakh people, proud of your indomitable yearning for freedom, which is as limitless as the steppe where you were born. You come from different backgrounds, in which suffering played a big part.

Here you sit side by side, in a spirit of friendship, not because you have forgotten the evil there has been in your history, but because you are rightly more interested in the good that you can build together. There is no true reconciliation which does not lead to generous shared commitment.

Realize that each one of you is of unique worth, and be ready to accept one another with your respective convictions as you search together for the fullness of truth. Your country has experienced the deadly violence of ideology. Do not let yourselves fall prey now to the no less destructive violence of "emptiness". What a suffocating void it is when nothing matters in life, when you believe in nothing! Emptiness is the negation of the infinite, which your steppe-land powerfully evokes: it is the opposite of that Infinity for which the human heart has an irresistible longing.

3. I have been told that, in your beautiful Kazakh language, "I love you" is "men senen jaskè korejmen", which can be translated as "I look upon you well, my gaze upon you is good". Human love, but more fundamentally still God's love for humanity and creation, stems from a loving gaze, a gaze that helps us see the good and leads us to do what is good: "God saw everything he had made, and he found it very good" (Gen 1:31). Such a gaze allows us to see all that is positive in things and leads us to ponder far beneath the surface the beauty and richness of every human being we meet.

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Spontaneously we ask ourselves: "What is it that constitutes the beauty and greatness of the human person?" Here is the answer I give you: what makes a human being great is the stamp of God which each of us bears. According to the Bible, a human being is created "in the image and likeness of God" (cf. Gen 1:26). This is why the human heart is never satisfied: it wants more and better, it wants everything. No finite reality satisfies or placates its longing. Saint Augustine, one of the early Church Fathers, wrote: "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you" (Confessions, 1,1). Is it not perhaps the same intuition that prompts the question which your great thinker and poet Ahmed Jassavi repeats several times in his poems: "What is life's point if not to be given, and given to the Most High God?"

4. Dear friends, in these words of Ahmed Jassavi there is a great message, echoing what religious tradition describes as a "vocation". In giving life to man, God entrusts to him a task and awaits his response. To declare that the purpose of human life, with all its experiences, its joys and sorrows, is that it be "given to the Most High God" in no way diminishes or denies our life. Rather, it is an assertion of the supreme dignity of the human person: made in the image and likeness of God, men and women are called to cooperate in transmitting life and in ruling over creation (cf. Gen 1:26-28).

The Pope of Rome has come to say this to you: there is a God who has thought of you and given you life. He loves you personally and he entrusts the world to you. It is he who stirs in you the thirst for freedom and the desire for knowledge. Allow me to profess before you with humility and pride the faith of Christians: Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God made man two thousand years ago, came to reveal to us this truth through his person and his teaching. Only in the encounter with him, the Word made flesh, do we find the fullness of self-realization and happiness. Religion itself, without the experience of wondrous discovery of the Son of God and communion with him who became our brother, becomes a mere set of principles which are increasingly difficult to understand, and rules which are increasingly hard to accept.

5. Dear friends, you sense that no earthly reality can fully satisfy you. You are aware that openness to the world is not enough to satisfy your thirst for life and that freedom and peace can come only from Another who is infinitely greater than you, even though he is very close to you.

Realize that you are not your own masters, and open yourselves to the One who created you out of love and wants to make you worthy, free and good people. I encourage you to adopt this attitude of confident openness: learn to listen in silence to the voice of God, who speaks in the depths of every heart; build your lives on sure and solid foundations; do not be afraid of commitment and sacrifice, which today require a great investment of energies, but which are the guarantee of success tomorrow. Discover the truth about yourselves, and new horizons will not cease to open up before you.

Dear young people, perhaps these words of mine seem unusual to you. To me however they seem relevant and necessary for people today, who at times delude themselves that they are all-powerful, because they have made great scientific progress and managed in some sense to control the complex world of technology. But every individual has a heart: intelligence may drive machines, but it is the heart that beats with life! Give your heart the vital resources which it needs, allow God to enter your life: then your life will brighten with his divine light.

6. I came among you in order to offer you encouragement. We are at the beginning of a new millennium: it is an important time for the world, because in people's minds there is a growing conviction that we cannot go on living divided as we are. Unfortunately nowadays, when communications are becoming easier by the day, differences are often apparent in still more dramatic forms. I urge you to work for a more united world, and to do so in your everyday life, bringing to the task the creative contribution of a heart renewed.

Your country is counting on you and expects much from you in the years ahead: the path your country takes will be determined by your choices. You will be the face of Kazakhstan tomorrow! Be courageous, fear nothing, and you will not be disappointed.

May the Most High God protect you always, and may his blessing be upon each of you, upon your loved ones and upon every aspect of your lives!

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# 2002

July 25, 2002

Papal Welcoming Ceremony

Exhibition Place, near Lake Ontario, 25 July 2002

Holy Father's Opening Greeting

Dear Young Friends!

1. You have come to Toronto from every continent to celebrate World Youth Day. My joyful and heartfelt greetings go to you! I have been eagerly looking forward to this meeting, especially when day after day from all parts of the world I received in the Vatican good news about all the initiatives that have marked your journey here. And often, even without having met you, I commended you one by one in my prayers to the Lord. He has always known you, and he loves each one of you personally.

With fraternal affection I greet the Cardinals and Bishops who are here with you; in particular Bishop Jacques Berthelet, President of the Conference of Catholic Bishops of Canada, Cardinal Aloysius Ambrozic, Archbishop of this city, and Cardinal James Francis Stafford, President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity. To all of you I say: may your contacts with your Pastors help you to discover and appreciate more and more the beauty of the Church, experienced as missionary communion.

2. Listening to the long list of countries from which you come, we have practically made a trip round the world. Behind each of you I have glimpsed the faces of all your fellow young people whom I have met in the course of my apostolic travels, and whom in a way you represent here. I have imagined you on a journey, walking in the shadow of the Jubilee Cross, on this great youth pilgrimage which, moving from continent to continent, is eager to hold the whole world in a close embrace of faith and hope.

Today this pilgrimage makes a stop here, on the shores of Lake Ontario. We are reminded of another lake, the Lake of Tiberias, on the shores of which the Lord Jesus made a fascinating proposal to the first disciples, some of whom were probably young like you (cf. Jn 1:35-42).

The Pope, who loves you dearly, has come from afar to listen again with you to Jesus' words. As was the case for the disciples on that day long ago, these words can set the hearts of young people aflame and motivate their whole lives. I invite you then to make the various activities of this World Youth Day which is just beginning a special time when each of you listens attentively to the Lord, with a willing and generous heart, in order to become the "salt of the earth and light of the world" (cf. Mt 5:13-16).

Address of the Holy Father

Dear Young People!

1. What we have just heard is the Magna Carta of Christianity: the Beatitudes. We have seen once more, with the eyes of our heart, what happened at that time. A crowd of people is gathered around Jesus on the mountain: men and women, young people and elderly folk, the healthy and the infirm, who have come from Galilee, but also from Jerusalem, from Judea, from the cities of the Decapolis, from Tyre and Sidon. All of them anxiously awaiting a word, a gesture that will give them comfort and hope.

We too are gathered here, this evening, to listen attentively to the Lord. He looks at you with affection: you come from the different regions of Canada, of the United States, of Central and South America, of Europe, of Africa, of Asia, of Oceania. I have heard your festive voices, your cries, your songs, and I have felt the deep longing that beats within your hearts: you want to be happy! Dear young people, many and enticing are the voices that call out to you from all sides: many of these voices speak to you of a joy that can be had with money, with success, with power. Mostly they propose a joy that comes with the superficial and fleeting pleasure of the senses.

2. Dear friends, the aged Pope, full of years but still young at heart, answers your youthful desire for happiness with words that are not his own. They are words that rang out two thousand years ago. Words that we have heard again tonight: "Blessed are they . . ." The key word in Jesus' teaching is a proclamation of joy: "Blessed are they . . ."

People are made for happiness. Rightly, then, you thirst for happiness. Christ has the answer to this desire of yours. But he asks you to trust him. True joy is a victory, something which cannot be obtained without a long and difficult struggle. Christ holds the secret of this victory. You know what came before. It is told in the Book of Genesis: God created man and woman in a paradise, Eden, because he wanted them to be happy. Unfortunately, sin spoiled his initial plans. But God did not resign himself to this defeat. He sent his Son into the world in order to give back to us an even more beautiful idea of heaven. God became man — the Fathers of the Church tell us — so that men and women could become God. This is the decisive turning-point, brought about in human history by the Incarnation.

3. What struggle are we talking about? Christ himself gives us the answer. "Though he was in the form of God," Saint Paul has written, he "did not count equality with God something to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant . . . he humbled himself and became obedient unto death" (Phil 2:6-8). It was a struggle unto death. Christ fought this battle not for himself but for us. From his death, life has sprung forth. The tomb at Calvary has become the cradle of the new humanity on its journey to true happiness.

The "Sermon on the Mount" marks out the map of this journey. The eight Beatitudes are the road signs that show the way. It is an uphill path, but he has walked it before us. He said one day: "He who follows me will not walk in darkness" (Jn 8:12). And at another time he added: "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full" (Jn 15:11). It is by walking with Christ that we can achieve joy, true joy! Precisely for this reason he again repeats the proclamation of joy to you today: "Blessed are they . . ."

Now that we are about to welcome his glorious Cross, the Cross that has accompanied young people on the roadways of the world, let this consoling and demanding word echo in the silence of your hearts: "Blessed are they. . ."

4. Gathered around the Lord's Cross, we look to him: Jesus did not limit himself to proclaiming the Beatitudes, he lived them! Looking at his life anew, re-reading the Gospel, we marvel: the poorest of the poor, the most gentle among the meek, the person with the purest and most merciful heart is none other than Jesus. The Beatitudes are nothing more than the description of a face, his face!

At the same time, the Beatitudes describe what a Christian should be: they are the portrait of Jesus' disciple, the picture of those who have accepted the Kingdom of God and want their life to be in tune with the demands of the Gospel. To these Jesus speaks, calling them "blessed".

The joy promised by the Beatitudes is the very joy of Jesus himself: a joy sought and found in obedience to the Father and in the gift of self to others.

5. Young people of Canada, of America and of every part of the world! By looking at Jesus you will learn what it means to be poor in spirit, meek and merciful; what it means to seek justice, to be pure in heart, to be peacemakers.

With your gaze set firmly on him, you will discover the path of forgiveness and reconciliation in a world often laid waste by violence and terror. Last year we saw with dramatic clarity the tragic face of human malice. We saw what happens when hatred, sin and death take command. But today Jesus' voice resounds in the midst of our gathering. His is a voice of life, of hope, of forgiveness; a voice of justice and of peace. Let us listen to this voice!

6. Dear friends, the Church today looks to you with confidence and expects you to be the people of the Beatitudes.

Blessed are you if, like Jesus, you are poor in spirit, good and merciful; if you really seek what is just and right; if you are pure of heart, peacemakers, lovers of the poor and their servants. Blessed are you! Only Jesus is the true Master, only Jesus speaks the unchanging message that responds to the deepest longings of the human heart, because he alone knows "what is in each person" (cf. Jn 2:25). Today he calls you to be the salt and light of the world, to choose goodness, to live in justice, to become instruments of love and peace. His call has always demanded a choice between good and evil, between light and darkness, between life and death. He makes the same invitation today to you who are gathered here on the shores of Lake Ontario.

7. What call will those on early morning watch choose to follow? To believe in Jesus is to accept what he says, even when it runs contrary to what others are saying. It means rejecting the lure of sin, however attractive it may be, in order to set out on the difficult path of the Gospel virtues.

Young people listening to me, answer the Lord with strong and generous hearts! He is counting on you. Never forget: Christ needs you to carry out his plan of salvation! Christ needs your youth and your generous enthusiasm to make his proclamation of joy resound in the new millennium. Answer his call by placing your lives at his service in your brothers and sisters! Trust Christ, because he trusts you.

8. Lord Jesus Christ, proclaim once more your Beatitudes in the presence of these young people, gathered in Toronto for the World Youth Day. Look upon them with love and listen to their young hearts, ready to put their future on the line for you. You have called them to be the "salt of the earth and light of the world". Continue to teach them the truth and beauty of the vision that you proclaimed on the Mountain. Make them men and women of the Beatitudes! Let the light of your wisdom shine upon them, so that in word and deed they may spread in the world the light and salt of the Gospel. Make their whole life a bright reflection of you, who are the true light that came into this world so that whoever believes in you will not die, but will have eternal life (cf. Jn 3:16)!

### **July 27, 2002**

Prayer Vigil With Young People  
Toronto, Downsview Park, Saturday 27 July 2002  
Holy Father's Opening Greeting

Young people of the world, dear Friends,

With affection in the Lord I greet you all! I am happy to be among you again, after the days you have spent in catechesis and reflection, meeting one another and celebrating. We are coming towards the final phase of your World Day, the high point of which will be our Eucharistic celebration tomorrow.

In you, gathered from the four corners of the world, the Church sees her future, and feels the call to the youthfulness with which the Holy Spirit always enriches her. The enthusiasm and joy that you are showing are a sure sign of your love for the Lord, and of your desire to serve him in the Church and in your brothers and sisters.

2. A few days ago, in Wadowice, my home town, the Third International Young People's Forum took place. It brought together Catholics, Greek-Catholics and Orthodox youth from Poland and Eastern Europe. Today, thousands of young people from all over Poland are there and are connected with us through a television link-up to celebrate this Prayer Vigil with us. Allow me to greet them in Polish:

I greet the Polish-speaking young people, so many of whom have come from our Homeland and from other countries throughout the world, and the thousands of young people from all of Poland and from the countries of Eastern Europe who have gathered in Wadowice to participate in this prayer vigil with us. To all of you I express the hope that these days will bear abundant fruits of generous fervour in holding fast to Jesus Christ and his Gospel.

3. During this evening's Vigil we shall welcome the Cross of Christ, the sign of God's love for humanity. We shall praise the Risen Lord, the light that shines in the darkness. We shall pray in the words of the Psalms, repeating the very words that Jesus used during his earthly life when he spoke to his Father. The



Psalms are still the prayer of the Church today. Then we shall listen to the word of the Lord, a lamp for our steps, a light for our path (cf. Ps 119:105).

I invite you to be the voice of the young people of the whole world, to express their joys, their disappointments, their hopes. Look to Jesus, the living One, and repeat what the Apostles asked: "Lord, teach us how to pray". Prayer will be the salt that gives flavour to your lives, and leads you to him, humanity's true light.

Address by the Holy Father

Dear Young People,

When, back in 1985, I wanted to start the World Youth Days, I was thinking of the words of the Apostle John that we have listened to this evening: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life... we proclaim also to you" (1 Jn 1:1.3). And I imagined the World Youth Days as a powerful moment in which the young people of the world could meet Christ, who is eternally young, and could learn from him how to be bearers of the Gospel to other young people.

This evening, together with you, I praise God and give thanks to him for the gift bestowed on the Church through the World Youth Days. Millions of young people have taken part, and as a result have become better and more committed Christian witnesses. I am especially thankful to you, who have responded to my invitation to come here to Toronto in order to "tell the world of the happiness you have found in meeting Jesus Christ, of your desire to know him better, of how you are committed to proclaiming the Gospel of salvation to the ends of the earth!" (Message for the 17th World Youth Day, No. 5).

2. The new millennium opened with two contrasting scenarios: one, the sight of multitudes of pilgrims coming to Rome during the Great Jubilee to pass through the Holy Door which is Christ, our Savior and Redeemer; and the other, the terrible terrorist attack on New York, an image that is a sort of icon of a world in which hostility and hatred seem to prevail.

The question that arises is dramatic: on what foundations must we build the new historical era that is emerging from the great transformations of the twentieth century? Is it enough to rely on the technological revolution now taking place, which seems to respond only to criteria of productivity and efficiency, without reference to the individual's spiritual dimension or to any universally shared ethical values? Is it right to be content with provisional answers to the ultimate questions, and to abandon life to the impulses of instinct, to short-lived sensations or passing fads?

The question will not go away: on what foundations, on what certainties should we build our lives and the life of the community to which we belong?

3. Dear Friends, spontaneously in your hearts, in the enthusiasm of your young years you know the answer, and you are saying it through your presence here this evening: Christ alone is the cornerstone on which it is possible solidly to build one's existence. Only Christ – known, contemplated and loved – is the faithful friend who never lets us down, who becomes our travelling companion, and whose words warm our hearts (cf. Lk 24:13-35).

The twentieth century often tried to do without that cornerstone, and attempted to build the city of man without reference to Him. It ended by actually building that city against man! Christians know that it is not possible to reject or ignore God without demeaning man.

4. The aspiration that humanity nurtures, amid countless injustices and sufferings, is the hope of a new civilization marked by freedom and peace. But for such an undertaking, a new generation of builders is needed. Moved not by fear or violence but by the urgency of genuine love, they must learn to build, brick by brick, the city of God within the city of man.

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Allow me, dear young people, to consign this hope of mine to you: you must be those "builders"! You are the men and women of tomorrow. The future is in your hearts and in your hands. God is entrusting to you the task, at once difficult and uplifting, of working with him in the building of the civilization of love.

5. From the Letter of John – the youngest of the apostles, and maybe for that very reason the most loved by the Lord – we have listened to these words: "God is light and in him there is no darkness at all" (1 Jn 1:5). But, John observes, no one has ever seen God. It is Jesus, the only Son of the Father, who has revealed him to us (cf. Jn 1:18). And if Jesus has revealed God, he has revealed the light. With Christ in fact "the true light that enlightens every man" (Jn 1:9) has come into the world.

Dear young people, let yourselves be taken over by the light of Christ, and spread that light wherever you are. "The light of the countenance of Jesus – says the Catechism of the Catholic Church – illumines the eyes of our heart and teaches us to see everything in the light of his truth and his compassion for all" (No. 2715).

If your friendship with Christ, your knowledge of his mystery, your giving of yourselves to him, are genuine and deep, you will be "children of the light", and you will become "the light of the world". For this reason I repeat to you the Gospel words: "Let your light so shine before others, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Mt 5:16).

6. This evening the Pope, along with all of you, young people from every continent, reaffirms before the world the faith that sustains the life of the Church. Christ is the light of the nations. He died and rose again in order to give back to those who journey through time the hope of eternity. Nothing human is hurt by the Gospel: every authentic value, in whatever culture it appears, is accepted and raised up by Christ. Knowing this, Christians cannot fail to feel in their hearts the pride and responsibility of their call to be witnesses to the light of the Gospel.

Precisely for this reason I say to you this evening: let the light of Christ shine in your lives! Do not wait until you are older in order to set out on the path of holiness! Holiness is always youthful, just as eternal is the youthfulness of God.

Communicate to everyone the beauty of the contact with God that gives meaning to your lives. In the quest for justice, in the promotion of peace, in your commitment to brotherhood and solidarity, let no one surpass you!

How beautiful the song that we have been hearing during these days:

"Light of the world! Salt of the earth!  
Be for the world the face of love!  
Be for the earth the reflection of his light!"

That is the most beautiful and precious gift that you can give to the Church and the world. You know that the Pope is with you, with his prayer and fond blessing.

**July 28, 2002**

Solemn Mass: Homily of the Holy Father  
Toronto, Downsview Park, Sunday July 28 2002

"You are the salt of the earth!  
You are the light of the world!" (Mt 5:13-14)

Dear Young People of the Seventeenth World Youth Day,  
Chers Frères et Soeurs,

1. On a hillside near the lake of Galilee, Jesus's disciples listened to his gentle and urgent voice; as gentle as the landscape of Galilee itself, as urgent as a call to choose between life and death, between truth and falsehood. The Lord spoke words of life that would echo for ever in the hearts of his followers.

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Today he is speaking the same words to you, the young people of Toronto and Ontario, of the whole of Canada, of the United States, of the Caribbean, of Spanish-speaking America and Portuguese-speaking America, of Europe, Africa, Asia and Oceania. Listen to the voice of Jesus in the depths of your hearts! His words tell you who you are as Christians. They tell you what you must do to remain in his love.

2. But Jesus offers one thing, and the "spirit of the world" offers another. In today's Reading from the Letter to the Ephesians, Saint Paul tells us that Jesus leads us from darkness into light (cf. Eph 5:8). Perhaps the great Apostle is thinking of the light that blinded him, the persecutor of Christians, on the road to Damascus. When later he recovered his sight, nothing was as before. He had been born anew and nothing would ever take his new-found joy away from him.

You too are called to be transformed. "Awake, O sleeper, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light" (Eph 5:14), says Saint Paul.

The "spirit of the world" offers many false illusions and parodies of happiness. There is perhaps no darkness deeper than the darkness that enters young people's souls when false prophets extinguish in them the light of faith and hope and love. The greatest deception, and the deepest source of unhappiness, is the illusion of finding life by excluding God, of finding freedom by excluding moral truths and personal responsibility.

3. The Lord is calling you to choose between these two voices competing for your souls. That decision is the substance and challenge of World Youth Day. Why have you come together from all parts of the world? To say in your hearts: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (Jn 6:68). Jesus – the intimate friend of every young person – has the words of life.

The world you are inheriting is a world which desperately needs a new sense of brotherhood and human solidarity. It is a world which needs to be touched and healed by the beauty and richness of God's love. It needs witnesses to that love. It needs you – to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

4. Salt is used to preserve and keep. As apostles for the Third Millennium, your task is to preserve and keep alive the awareness of the presence of our Savior Jesus Christ, especially in the celebration of the Eucharist, the memorial of his saving death and glorious resurrection. You must keep alive the memory of the words of life which he spoke, the marvellous works of mercy and goodness which he performed. You must constantly remind the world of the "power of the Gospel to save" (Rom 1:16)!

Salt seasons and improves the flavour of food. Following Jesus, you have to change and improve the "taste" of human history. With your faith, hope and love, with your intelligence, courage and perseverance, you have to humanize the world we live in, in the way that today's Reading from Isaiah indicates: "loose the bonds of injustice. . . share your bread with the hungry. . . remove the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil... Then your light shall rise in the darkness" (Is 58:6-10).

5. Even a tiny flame lifts the heavy lid of night. How much more light will you make, all together, if you bond as one in the communion of the Church! If you love Jesus, love the Church! Do not be discouraged by the sins and failings of some of her members. The harm done by some priests and religious to the young and vulnerable fills us all with a deep sense of sadness and shame. But think of the vast majority of dedicated and generous priests and religious whose only wish is to serve and do good! There are many priests, seminarians and consecrated persons here today; be close to them and support them! And if, in the depths of your hearts, you feel the same call to the priesthood or consecrated life, do not be afraid to follow Christ on the royal road of the Cross! At difficult moments in the Church's life, the pursuit of holiness becomes even more urgent. And holiness is not a question of age; it is a matter of living in the Holy Spirit, just as Kateri Tekakwitha and so many other young people have done.

You are young, and the Pope is old and a bit tired. But he still fully identifies with your hopes and aspirations. Although I have lived through much darkness, under harsh totalitarian regimes, I have seen enough evidence to be unshakably convinced that no difficulty, no fear is so great that it can completely suffocate the hope that springs eternal in the hearts of the young.

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Do not let that hope die! Stake your lives on it! We are not the sum of our weaknesses and failures; we are the sum of the Father's love for us and our real capacity to become the image of his Son.

6. O Lord Jesus Christ, keep these young people in your love. Let them hear your voice and believe what you say, for you alone have the words of life.

Teach them how to profess their faith, bestow their love, and impart their hope to others. Make them convincing witnesses to your Gospel in a world so much in need of your saving grace.

Make them the new people of the Beatitudes, that they may be the salt of the earth and the light of the world at the beginning of the Third Christian Millennium!

Mary, Mother of the Church, protect and guide these young men and women of the Twenty-first Century. Keep us all close to your maternal heart. Amen.

## Pastores Gregis

Young people, a pastoral priority for the future

53. The Bishop, as pastor and father of the Christian community, will be particularly concerned for the evangelization and spiritual accompaniment of young people. A minister of hope can hardly fail to build the future together with those to whom the future is entrusted, that is, with young people. Like "sentinels of the morning", young people are awaiting the dawn of a new world. The experience of the World Youth Days, which the Bishops heartily encourage, shows how many young people are ready to commit themselves in the Church and in the world, if only they are offered real responsibility and an integral Christian formation.

Here, voicing the thought of the Synod Fathers, I make a special appeal to persons of consecrated life from the many Institutes engaged in the area of educating and training children, adolescents and young people. They should not yield to discouragement because of the difficulties of the moment or give up their commendable work, but rather intensify their efforts and aim at ever better results.<sup>203</sup>

Young people, through personal relationships with their pastors and teachers, must be encouraged to grow in charity and be trained for a life of generosity and availability for the service of others, especially the needy and the infirm. In this way it will be easier to speak with them about the other Christian virtues, especially chastity. By taking this path they will come to know that life is "something beautiful" when it is given to others, following the example of Jesus. Thus, they will be able to make responsible and binding decisions, whether about marriage, the sacred ministry or the consecrated life.

The promotion of vocations

54. It is essential to promote a vocational culture in the broadest sense: young people, in other words, need to be helped to discover that life itself is a vocation. The Bishop would do well, then, to appeal to families, parish communities and educational institutes to assist boys and girls in discovering God's plan in their lives and in embracing the call to holiness which God from the beginning addresses to each person.<sup>204</sup>

It is very important in this regard to reinforce the vocational dimension of all pastoral activity. The Bishop must ensure that the pastoral care of young people and the promotion of vocations is entrusted to priests and to persons capable of passing on their love for Jesus by their enthusiasm and the example of their lives. It will be their responsibility to accompany young people personally, by their friendship and, when possible, by spiritual direction, in order to help them to grasp the signs of God's call and to discover the strength to respond to it in the grace of the sacraments and in the life of prayer, which is above all an attentive listening to God who speaks.

POPE'S MESSAGE FOR 2004 WORLD YOUTH DAY

"We Wish to See Jesus"

VATICAN CITY, MARCH 4, 2004 (Zenit.org).- Here is the message John Paul II has sent to the youth of the world for the 19th World Youth Day, to be observed at the diocesan level on Palm Sunday, April 4.

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MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II  
TO THE YOUTH OF THE WORLD  
ON THE OCCASION  
OF THE XIX WORLD YOUTH DAY 2004  
"We Wish to See Jesus" (John 12:21)

My dear young people!

1. This year 2004 is the final stage before the great event in Cologne, where the 20th World Youth Day will be celebrated in 2005. I therefore invite you to intensify your path of spiritual preparation by reflecting on the theme I have chosen for this 19th World Youth Day: "We wish to see Jesus" (John 12:21).

This is a request made to the Apostles one day by some "Greeks." They wanted to know who Jesus was. They had come not simply to see what kind of impression the man Jesus would make. Moved by great curiosity and a presentiment that they had found the answer to their deepest questions, they wanted to know who he really was and whence he came.

2. My dear young people, I want you too to imitate those "Greeks" who spoke to Philip, moved by a desire to "see Jesus." May your search be motivated not simply by intellectual curiosity, though that too is something positive, but be stimulated above all by an inner urge to find the answer to the question about the meaning of your life. Like the rich young man in the Gospel, you too should go in search of Jesus to ask him: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" (Mark 10:17). Mark the Evangelist states clearly that Jesus looked at him and loved him.

You may remember another episode in which Jesus says to Nathaniel: "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you," drawing from the heart of that Israelite, in whom there was no guile (cf. John 1:47), a fine profession of faith: "Rabbi, you are the Son of God!" (John 1:49). Those who approach Jesus with a heart free of prejudice can quite easily come to have faith because Jesus himself has already seen them and loved them first. The most sublime aspect of human dignity is precisely man's vocation to communicate with God in a profound exchange of glances that is life transforming. In order to see Jesus, we first need to let him look at us!

The desire to see Jesus dwells deep in the heart of each man and each woman. My dear young people, allow Jesus to gaze into your eyes so that the desire to see the Light, and to experience the splendor of the Truth, may grow within you. Whether we are aware of it or not, God has created us because he loves us and so that we in turn may love him. This is the reason for the unquenchable nostalgia for God that man preserves in his heart: "Your face, Lord, do I seek. Do not hide your face from me" (Psalm 27:8-9). That Face -- we know -- was revealed to us by God in Jesus Christ.

3. My dear young people, don't you too wish to contemplate the beauty of that Face? That is the question I address to you on this World Youth Day 2004. Don't be too hasty in your reply. First of all, create a silence within yourselves. Allow this ardent desire to see God emerge from the depth of your hearts, a desire that is sometimes stifled by the distractions of the world and by the allurements of pleasures. Allow this desire to emerge and you will have the wonderful experience of meeting Jesus. Christianity is not simply a doctrine: it is an encounter in faith with God made present in our history through the incarnation of Jesus.

Try by every means to make this encounter possible, and look towards Jesus who is passionately seeking you. Seek him with the eyes of the flesh through the events of life and in the faces of others; but seek him too with the eyes of the soul through prayer and meditation on the Word of God, because "The contemplation of Christ's face cannot fail to be inspired by all that we are told about him in Sacred Scripture" ("Novo Millennio Ineunte," 17).

4. To see Jesus, to contemplate his Face, is an unquenchable desire, but it is a desire that man unfortunately may also deform. This is what happens with sin, because it is the very essence of sin to draw our eyes away from the Creator and to turn them towards what he has created.

Those "Greeks" in search of the truth would not have been able to approach Christ if their desire, animated by a free and voluntary act, had not been expressed through a clear decision: "We wish to see Jesus." To be truly free means having the strength to choose the One for whom we were created and accepting his lordship over our lives. You perceive it in the depths of your heart: all that is good on earth, all professional success, even the human love that you dream of, can never fully satisfy your deepest and most intimate desires.

Only an encounter with Jesus can give full meaning to your lives: "for you made us for yourself, and our heart finds no peace until it rests in you" (Saint Augustine, "The Confessions," Book 1, Chapter 1). Do not let yourselves be distracted from this search. Persevere in it because it is your fulfillment and your joy that is at stake.

5. Dear friends, if you learn to discover Jesus in the Eucharist, you will also know how to discover him in your brothers and sisters, particularly in the very poor. The Eucharist received with love and adored with fervor becomes a school of freedom and charity in order to fulfill the commandment to love. Jesus speaks to us in the wonderful language of the gift of self and of love so great as to give our own life for it. Is that an easy thing? You know very well that it is not! It is not easy to forget our self, but if we do, it draws us away from possessive and narcissistic love and opens us up to the joy of a love that is self-giving.

This Eucharistic school of freedom and charity teaches us to overcome superficial emotions in order to be rooted firmly in what is true and good; it frees us from self-attachment in order to open ourselves to others. It teaches us to make the transition from an affective love to an effective love. For love is not merely a feeling; it is an act of will that consists of preferring, in a constant manner, the good of others to the good of oneself: "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lays down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

It is with such inner freedom and such burning charity that Jesus teaches us to find him in others, first of all in the disfigured face of the poor. Blessed Teresa of Calcutta loved to distribute her "visiting card" on which were written the words: "The fruit of silence is prayer; the fruit of prayer is faith, the fruit of faith is love, the fruit of love is service, the fruit of service is peace." This is the way to meet Christ. Go out to meet all of human suffering spurred on by your generosity and with the love that God instills in your hearts by means of the Holy Spirit: "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40). The world is in urgent need of a great prophetic sign of fraternal charity! It is not enough to "speak" of Jesus. We must also let him be "seen" somehow through the eloquent witness of our own life (cf. "Novo Millennio Ineunte," 16).

Do not forget to seek Christ and to recognize his presence in the Church, which is like the continuation of his saving action in time and space. It is in the Church and through her that Jesus continues to make himself visible today and to allow humanity to come to him. In your parishes, movements and communities, be welcoming to one another in order to build communion among yourselves. This is the visible sign of the presence of Christ in the Church, in spite of being so often blurred by human sin.

6. Do not be surprised, then, when you meet the Cross on your way. Did not Jesus say to his disciples that the grain of wheat must fall into the earth and die in order to bear much fruit (cf. John 12:23-26)? He was indicating in this way that his life given unto death would bear fruit. You know this: after the resurrection of Christ, death shall no longer have the last word. Love is stronger than death. If Jesus accepted death on the cross, thus making it the source of life and the sign of love, he did so not out of weakness, or because he wished to suffer. He did so to gain our salvation and to allow us henceforth to take part in his divine life.

It is just this truth that I wished to bring to the minds of the young people of the world when I entrusted them with a large wooden Cross at the end of the Holy Year of the Redemption in 1984. Ever since then, it has traveled through different countries in preparation for your World Days. Hundreds of thousands of young people have prayed around this Cross. By laying at the feet of the Cross the burdens that had lain heavily upon them, they discovered that they were loved by God. Many of them also found the strength to change their lives.

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This year, on the 20th anniversary of that event, the Cross will be solemnly welcomed in Berlin. From there it will commence its pilgrimage throughout Germany, concluding in Cologne next year. Today I wish to repeat the words I said to you back then: "My dear young people, ... I entrust to you the Cross of Christ! Carry it throughout the world as a symbol of Christ's love for humanity, and announce to everyone that only in the death and resurrection of Christ can we find salvation and redemption."

7. Your contemporaries expect you to be witnesses of the One whom you have met and who gives you life. In your daily lives, be intrepid witnesses of a love that is stronger than death. It is up to you to accept this challenge! Put your talents and your youthful enthusiasm at the service of the proclamation of the Good News. Be the enthusiastic friends of Jesus who present the Lord to all those who wish to see him, especially those who are farthest away from him. Philip and Andrew brought those "Greeks" to Jesus: God uses human friendship to lead hearts to the source of divine charity. Feel responsible for the evangelization of your friends and all your contemporaries.

Throughout her life, the Blessed Virgin Mary steadfastly contemplated the face of Christ. May she keep you forever under the gaze of her Son (cf. "Rosarium Virginis Mariae," 10) and sustain you as you prepare for World Youth Day in Cologne. I ask you to set out towards it from now with responsible and active enthusiasm. The Virgin of Nazareth, the compassionate and patient Mother, will mould within you a contemplative heart, and teach you to fix your gaze on Jesus so that, in this world that passes away, you shall be prophets of a world that does not die.

With affection I impart a special blessing upon you that will accompany you on your way.

>From the Vatican, 22 February 2004

#### JOHN PAUL II'S ADDRESS TO SWISS YOUTH "Do Not Be Afraid to Encounter Jesus"

BERN, Switzerland, JUNE 7, 2004 (Zenit.org).- Here is a translation of the address John Paul II delivered Saturday to thousands of Swiss youths gathered in the BernArena Sports Palace.

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#### 1. Arise! (Luke 7:14).

This word of the Lord to the youth of Nain resounds with force today in our assembly, and it is addressed to you, dear young friends, Catholic boys and girls of Switzerland!

The Pope has come from Rome to hear it again with you from the lips of Christ and to echo it. I greet you all with affection, dear friends, and I thank you for your warm welcome. I also greet your bishops, priests, religious and the leaders who accompany you in your journey.

I respectfully address a special greeting to the Lord President of the Helvetian Confederation, Joseph Deiss; to Pastor Samuel Lutz, president of the Synodal Council of the Reformed Churches of Bern-Jura-Soleure; and to your friends of other confessions who have desired to participate in this event.

2. The Gospel of Luke recounts a meeting: On one hand, there is the sad procession that is accompanying to the cemetery the young son of a widowed mother; on the other, the joyful group of disciples who follow Jesus and listen to him. Also today, young friends, we can be a part of the sad procession on the street of the village of Nain. This can happen if you allow yourselves to despair, if the mirages of the consumer society seduce you and turn you away from true joy to engulf you in passing pleasures, if indifference and superficiality envelop you, if in the face of evil and suffering you doubt the presence of God and his love for every person, if you seek in the drift of a disordered affectivity the slaking of your interior thirst for true and pure love.

Precisely in such moments Christ comes close to each one of you and, as with the youth of Nain, addresses to you the word that rouses and awakens: "Arise!" "Accept the invitation that puts you on your feet!"

It is not a question of simple words: It is Jesus himself who is before you, the Word of God made flesh. He is the "true light that enlightens every man" (John 1:9), the truth that makes us free (see John 14:6), the life that the Father gives us in abundance (see John 10:10). Christianity is not a simple book of culture or an ideology, nor is it only a system of values and principles, even though lofty. Christianity is a person, a presence, a face: Jesus, who gives meaning and fullness to man's life.

3. Therefore, I say to you, dear young people: Do not be afraid to encounter Jesus. Seek him also in the careful and willing reading of sacred Scripture and in personal and communitarian prayer; seek him in active participation in the Eucharist; seek him in meeting a priest for the sacrament of reconciliation; seek him in the Church, which manifests itself to you in parish groups, in movements and associations; seek him in the face of a suffering, needy and foreign brother.

This search characterizes the life of so many young people who are your contemporaries on their way to the World Youth Day, which will be held in Cologne in the summer of next year. I now cordially invite you also to this great occasion of faith and witness.

Like you, I also was once 20 years old. I loved sports, skiing, reciting poetry. I studied and worked. I had hopes and worries. In those now distant years, at a time when the land of my birth was wounded by war and then by a totalitarian regime, I searched for meaning in my life. I found it in the following of the Lord Jesus.

4. Youth is the time in which you also, dear boys and girls, ask yourselves what to do with your lives, how to contribute to make the world better, how to promote justice and make peace.

Here, then, is the second invitation I address to you: "Listen!" Do not tire of training yourselves in the difficult discipline of listening. Listen to the voice of the Lord who speaks to you through the events of your daily lives, through the joys and suffering that accompany you, the persons who are next to you, the voice of conscience thirsty for truth, happiness, goodness and beauty.

If you are able to open your hearts and minds willingly, you will discover "your vocations," the plan that from everlasting God in his love has designed for you.

5. And you will be able to create a family, founded on marriage as a bond of love between a man and a woman who are committed to a communion of stable and faithful life. You will be able to affirm with your testimony that, despite all the difficulties and obstacles, it is possible to live Christian marriage in its fullness as an experience full of meaning and as "Good News" for all families.

You will be able to be, if this is your calling, a priest or religious, giving your life with an undivided heart to Christ and to the Church and thus become a sign of the loving presence of God in today's world. You will be able to be, like so many before you, bold and tireless apostles, vigilant in prayer, joyful and welcoming in the service of the community.

Yes, you can also be one of these. I know well that in face of such a proposal you feel hesitant. But I say to you: Do not be afraid! God does not let himself be outdone in generosity! After almost 60 years of priesthood, I am happy to give here, before all of you, my testimony: It is beautiful to be able to give one's all for the cause of the Kingdom of God!

6. There is still a third invitation: young people of Switzerland, "Start on the way!" Do not be content to discuss; do not wait for occasions to do good that perhaps will never occur. The time has arrived for action!

At the beginning of this third millennium, you also, young people, are called to proclaim the message of the Gospel with the testimony of your lives. The Church has need of your energies, of your enthusiasm, of your youthful ideals to make the Gospel permeate the fabric of society and bring about a civilization of real justice and love free of discriminations. Now more than ever, in a world often without light and without the courage of noble ideals, it is not the time to be ashamed of the Gospel (see Romans 1:16). Rather, it is the time to preach it from the housetops (see Matthew 10:27).

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The Pope, your bishops, the whole Christian community count on your commitment, on your generosity, and follow you with trust and hope: Young people of Switzerland, start on the way. The Lord walks with you.

Have the cross of Christ in your hands. Have the word of Life on your lips. Have the salvific grace of the Risen Lord in your hearts!

Arise! It is Christ who is speaking to you. Listen to him!

## Other documents

MORNING WATCHMEN

Cardinal James F. Stafford, President, Pontifical Council for the Laity

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### REFLECTIONS ON THE HOLY FATHER'S APOSTOLIC LETTER NOVO MILLENNIO INEUNTE - 1

At the conclusion of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, the Holy Father John Paul II gave the Church the gift of the Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio ineunte*, a precious document that beginning with a profound reflection on the Holy Year just concluded relaunches the Church towards the future, towards the third millennium. We might say that *Novo Millennio ineunte* is the navigation chart for "putting out into the deep", *Duc in altum*; it is a pastoral programme, a guide for the Church's journey.

In the Apostolic Letter we find a strong and urgent reference to young people. The Pope invites the young people to be "morning watchmen" at the dawn of the new millennium. In the document the Holy Father makes an analysis, a detailed memorandum of the Jubilee Year and in number nine he takes into particular consideration the Jubilee of Young People. At the beginning of the third millennium we cannot forget that the experience of *Tor Vergata* was a breath of hope for everyone. It was the largest gathering of people in Europe's history, the largest for the number of its participants but also for its meaning. In referring to it in *Novo Millennio ineunte*, the Holy Father says "Rome became 'young with the young'" (n. 9). We can also add that the Church became "young with the young". Once again we realized that young people are not only the hope for the future, but are already present and active in the Church. They really are the "morning watchmen" at the dawn of the third millennium.

When the Holy Father launched the idea of World Youth Day, many critical voices were raised, some even hoped that this papal initiative would be a great failure. Many analysts said that the youth were unaware of the post-war shortages and had not known the sufferings of the great wars which destroyed Europe in the first half of the 20th century. Others evoked the phantom of the 1968 protests and post-modern indifferentism that was taking hold of the new generations of the children of television, of rock 'n' roll, of internet and of the sexual revolution. However, when my predecessor, Cardinal Eduardo Pironio, as President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity threw himself into this wonderful initiative that was born from the heart of Pope John Paul II, the results were not long in coming. The response from the young people was great and the Church was enriched by the valid contribution of a generation that many considered lost.

Young people want to be committed to a continuous and complete reconciliation

One could sense a yearning for authenticity, for generosity, a strong desire to be witnesses in the world, to draw attention not to themselves but to certain values that seemed lost, dead. They were young people who live in freedom (cf. John Paul II, *Crossing the threshold of hope*, ch. 19), who had not experienced the extermination camps or the trenches, but were well aware that these dangers would be lying in wait unless they built a new model of society that was more human and more in harmony with the will of God. The idealism of these young people touched many consciences, it was felt by many governments, it appeared in the streets of many cities that were considered cold and unchangeable. I am thinking, for example, of the "Paris revolution" of 1998, when the young people of the 13th World Youth Day followed the Way of the Cross along the streets of the capital of modernity before the astonished eyes of the passers-by.

The young people of this new millennium are beginning to live more purified from the romantic traditions and rational prejudices, more aware of the limits of human reason and more anxious to build a society of peace that leaves a mark in history at any cost. These are the young people who arrived in *Tor Vergata*,

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young people who spoke of pardon and of chastity, of prayer and of commitment, of vocational seeking, young people for whom peace is something more than "sex, drugs and rock 'n roll". They were all committed to a continuous and complete reconciliation. They were young people who spoke about martyrdom and accepted the challenges of the Pope who questioned them from the Gospel, from the "workshop of faith", from the workshop where the Christian generations of the third millennium are forged.

Youth is perfect time to present ideal of Christian holiness that is born from love

Youth is not "only a period of life that corresponds to a certain number of years, it is also a time given by Providence to every person and given to him as a responsibility. During that time he searches, like the young man in the Gospel, for answers to basic questions; he searches not only for the meaning of life, but also for a concrete way to go about living his life. This is the most fundamental characteristic of youth" (Crossing the threshold of hope, ch. 19). In fact, these words of Pope John Paul II describe very well what youth is. It is the time of life in which the human being establishes himself. It is, therefore, a period of work in personal formation, in forging one's character, in deepening the values that will sustain one's life. For this reason, if young people are a duty in themselves, they are also a duty for the Church, a priority choice in the commitment to the evangelization of the men and women of our time and in the construction of a society founded on Christian values.

Youth, moreover, is the time when the human being seeks love as a key instrument for his growth and self-fulfilment. It is the time when the desire to give one's life to the other and to others is strongest. Youth is self-giving, commitment, generosity. For this reason it is the perfect time for presenting the ideal of Christian holiness that is born from love. The young person seeks love and the Church, following Christ, makes love the centre of her message and the instrument for carrying out her mission. This priority of love is the point where the Church and young people meet. It is a long journey that does not end in a day, but it is a goal that harmonizes desire and provides the courage to overcome difficulties and accept suffering. This love is real, it is not mere sentiment. It is a love that takes life in its entirety and impels it towards the summit of happiness.

In his greeting for the 15th World Youth Day, the Pope asked the young people: "What did you come to seek? You came here to celebrate your Jubilee; the Jubilee of the young Church. Yours is not just any journey: if you have set out on pilgrimage, it is not just for the sake of recreation or an interest in culture. Well then, let me ask again: what have you come in search of? Or rather, who have you come here to find? There can only be one answer to that: you have come in search of Jesus Christ! But Jesus Christ has first gone in search of you. To celebrate the Jubilee can have no other meaning than that of celebrating and meeting Jesus Christ, the Word who took flesh and came to dwell among us" (John Paul II, 15 August 2000). The young people of the Jubilee were seeking Christ because this need for a sure guide is typical of young people. Young people "need guides, and they want them close at hand" (Crossing the threshold of hope, ch. 19). For this reason they need Christ, his Word, his person, his testimony, but above all his salvation. The Church continues Christ's work. Jesus Christ is in the Church, the Church is born from him. Only she can present Christ to the young people with certainty and truth. Christ is the best guide, he is the only one who has words of eternal life.

To be able to give, we must first draw near to Christ and fully understand his message

Young people are for the Church "a gift of the Spirit of God" (Novo Millennio ineunte, n. 9). They make her discover the deepest reality of her mission. The long lines of young people waiting to go to confession in the Circus Maximus restored the confidence of many priests in the sacrament of reconciliation. They taught us anew to be priests or, rather, they reconfirmed us in our vocation. They gave the world a very eloquent lesson of transcendence in presenting themselves to the merciful judgement of the Lord of life and of history in the magnificent setting of the Circus Maximus.

Young people invite us with their testimony to fix our gaze on the Lord, to contemplate his face. If we want to present to our young people an authentic Church, based on a sincere faith, a strong hope and love that knows no barriers, we must turn to Christ, the guide of young people, the only Master. "The Church's joy was great this year, as she devoted herself to contemplating the face of her Bridegroom and Lord. She became more than ever a pilgrim people, led by him who is the 'great shepherd of the sheep' (Heb 13,20). With extraordinary energy, involving so many of her members, the People of God here in Rome, as well as in

Jerusalem and in all the individual local Churches, went through the 'Holy Door' that is Christ. To him who is the goal of history and the one Saviour of the world, the Church and the Spirit cried out: 'Maranatha—Come, Lord Jesus' (cf. Apoc 22,17.20; 1 Cor 16,22)" (Novo Millennio ineunte, n. 1). Young people ask the Church to preserve this energy, this attitude of tireless searching for the face of Christ in all things, in all events; this is the sign of true authenticity.

To be able to give, we must first contemplate, draw near to Christ to attract others, profoundly understand his message to be able to transmit it in depth.

To follow Jesus is to walk in his footsteps, to adopt his way of life, to believe in his values

With their enthusiasm, young people encourage the Church to "put out into the deep". They tell us, with the Pope, not to be afraid to leave our many certainties to become seriously committed to a life of holiness and the evangelization of men. They invite us to be more generous. They teach us to put more trust in the action of the Lord, the only one who can change the hearts of two million young people, than in ourselves who have spent many nights fishing without catching even one fish. We have learned a lot from the experience of the World Youth Days, for which the most optimistic calculations of participation have always been exceeded by the action of God.

We must leave the peace of the lakeside and set out towards the encounter with God and with men.

Before a world in which the value of the superficial and the pleasurable holds sway, the young pilgrims made us discover the way of the Cross which is the way of authenticity in following Christ. To follow Jesus is to walk in his footsteps, adopt his way of life, believe in his values and in his convictions. It is to learn to give everything its right place, to establish clearly the parameters of the mission that has been entrusted to us. "Jesus is not a Messiah of triumph and power. In fact, he did not free Israel from Roman rule and he never assured it of political glory. As a true Servant of the Lord, he carried out his mission in solidarity, in service, and in the humiliation of death. He is the Messiah who did not fit into any mould and who came without fanfare, and who cannot be 'understood' with the logic of success and power, the kind of logic often used by the world to verify its projects and actions" (Message for the 16th World Youth Day, n. 2).

To follow Christ means to deny oneself and "to deny oneself is to give up one's own plans that are often small and petty in order to accept God's plan. This is the path of conversion, something indispensable in a Christian life, and that led St Paul to say, 'it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me' (Gal 2,20). Jesus does not ask us to give up living, but to accept a newness and fullness of life that only he can give. The human being has a deep-rooted tendency to 'think only of self', to regard one's own person as the centre of interest and to see oneself as the standard against which to gauge everything. One who chooses to follow Christ, on the other hand, avoids being wrapped up in himself and does not evaluate things according to self interest. He looks on life in terms of gift and gratuitousness, not in terms of conquest and possession. Life in its fullness is only lived in self-giving, and that is the fruit of the grace of Christ: an existence that is free and in communion with God and neighbour (cf. *Gaudium et spes*, n. 24)" (*ibid.*, n. 4).

For disciples of Christ the Cross is a sign of love and not of torture

To follow Christ, to be his disciple, is to courageously take the path of the Cross. For a disciple of Christ, the Cross is a sign of love, not of torture. "it is not suffering for its own sake that a Christian seeks, but love. When the cross is embraced it becomes a sign of love and of total self-giving. To carry it behind Christ means to be united with him in offering the greatest proof of love" (*ibid.*, n. 5).

We should not be afraid of proposing and of inviting young people to follow Christ. The Holy Father has been doing so since the beginning of his pontificate, he did it again in Tor Vergata and he asks it again in the Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio ineunte*: "if Christ is presented to young people as he really is, they experience him as an answer that is convincing and they can accept his message, even when it is demanding and bears the mark of the Cross. For this reason, in response to their enthusiasm, I did not hesitate to ask them to make a radical choice of faith and life and present them with a stupendous task: to become 'morning watchmen' (cf. Is 21,11-12) at the dawn of the millennium" (*ibid.*, n. 9).

These young people are the "morning watchmen" who will awaken their brothers and sisters and put out into the deep in this vast ocean of the third millennium which is opening before the Church.

May Mary Most Holy, "Star of the New Evangelization" be "the radiant dawn and sure guide for our steps" (ibid., n. 58).

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#### THE SALT OF THE EARTH, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Cardinal J. Francis Stafford

President, Pontifical Council for the Laity

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Cardinal Francis Stafford, President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, writes on World Youth Day

World Youth Day (WYD), initiated by Pope John Paul II in 1985, is unprecedented in Church history. In their ensemble they have been unique in their purpose and in the number of young people walking the new pilgrim paths of the world. Not even the immense crowds responding to the call of Pope Urban II in the 11th century can compare. In 1095 at Auvergne, France, the Pope appealed to the 100,000 persons before him to deliver the Christians in the East from the new perils that confronted them. It was an event commemorated by a 19th century bronze statue of the Pope in the Vatican Gardens preaching his message. His audience was overwhelmingly composed of "nobles, knights and lesser folk" and was motivated by the Pope's appeal for military support of the Byzantine Church and Empire in regaining territories in Asia Minor, Syria and the Holy Land. During the 1995 World Youth Day in Manila 5,000,000 young people—said to be the largest gathering ever on the planet—responded to the call of Pope John Paul II.

And his vision differs from that of Pope Urban II. In the 1985 Apostolic Letter to the Youth of the World, Pope John Paul II described the purpose of each World Youth Day by challenging the young people to be engaged in a holy conversation. He envisioned it to be a conversation with Jesus similar to the dialogue he had with the young man (Mk 10,17-22, Mt 19,16-22, Lk 18,18-23). The young people today were urged to ask the same question of Jesus, first directed to him by the rich young man: "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?". The young man was aware that his existence had a destiny which went beyond his earthly life. He had a growing consciousness within his heart of a yearning for the transcendent.

To be aware of the thirst for God is to be awakened to the dignity of the human being

Through World Youth Day the Pope hopes that each young person will be alert to that uniquely human yearning implanted in every heart. Why? To be aware of this desire for God is to be awakened to the transcendent dignity of the human person. The Pope further elaborated on his motive for inaugurating World Youth Day: "Dear young friends! The response which Jesus gives to his questioner in the Gospel is addressed to each one of you. Christ asks about the state of your moral awareness, and at the same time he questions you about the state of your conscience". Today's young people need the time, space and occasion to hear Jesus' response to the young man's question.

From Denver in 1993, to Manila in 1995, Paris in 1997 and Rome in 2000 to Toronto in 2002, the same fundamental vision has guided the Pope. He wishes the young people of the world to meet one another, to pray with one another, to receive catechesis from their bishops, and finally to meet with him during the Vigil on Saturday night and the Eucharist on Sunday morning. All of these are ways of engaging the young people in a holy conversation with Jesus.

Courtesy has been the keynote of these steep pilgrimages. The young people usher one another through their journey with singing. They greet one another with deference. They eagerly identify themselves to strangers. They readily respond to questions and supply helpful information. They are united in the bonds of mutual goodwill. There is an exchange of prayer and of love in the higher form of charity. During the pilgrimage they embrace hardship and even pain. These young men and women do not seem to have lost their childhood to "the light of common day". These are essential experiences for the future leaders of the new century.

Many WYD innovations have assisted the young pilgrims in their holy conversation, their *sacra conversatio*, with Jesus. The Vatican art exhibit, begun at Denver, has continued at each site. This year's exhibition at Toronto, *Images of Salvation*, is of the highest quality yet, both artistically and religiously. Its uniquely theological/aesthetic form makes visible the theme of this year's pilgrimage, "You are the salt of the earth! You are the light of the world!".

Each World Youth Day has made its own unique contribution to pastoral practice. The Holy Father emphasized the importance of having as many bishops as possible giving the days of catechesis. These sessions began at Denver and have involved at least 260 bishops as catechists during each WYD. This pastoral experience has strengthened their confidence in proclaiming to young people the Paschal Mystery.

Moreover, after 1993 WYD Denver, American young people have enthusiastically embraced the great Catholic tradition of pilgrimage. Most experienced it for the first time in the journey to Denver and the rendezvous with the Holy Father near Butterfly Hill in Cherry Creek State Park. One Coloradan wrote to me several years later about that pilgrimage, "Butterfly Hill [was] where Colorado gave the world a measure of hope".

'In your light we see light'

The summer sun has played an important role in these pilgrimages. The young people have experienced a spiritual journey from a place of muted light, like the Saturday evening Vigil, to one in which they begin to perceive that all created things have their splendour in the light of God. "In your light we see light".

Many have become more conscious of their need to be purged from the stain of sin. They are aware of the coarsening of the moral fibre and the clouding of the mind and imagination by the habit of sin. The 1997 Paris WYD developed a primary focus, explored more deeply in subsequent years, on the Christian's journey to light through the Sacraments of Initiation. The young people identify more easily with St Jerome's description of the Christian's experience of emerging from the baptismal waters, "As long as we were in the world, our eyes looked into the abyss and we lived in filth. After we were rescued from the waves, we began to look upon the sun and look at the true light. Confused in the presence of so much joy, we say: 'Hope in God, for I shall praise him, in the presence of my Savior and my God'".

The pilgrimage of the Youth Day Cross in Canada has impacted Catholic life and identity

The 1997 Paris World Youth Day also developed the so-called "days in the diocese" in which young people were exposed to the Catholic life within various dioceses of the host country. This has continued and expanded at each subsequent World Youth Day.

Rome 2000 had its own unique contributions. The most significant was the renewal of the sacrament of Reconciliation at the Circus Maximus. In *Novo Millennio ineunte* the Holy Father makes reference to the positive experience of this sacrament during the Holy Year: many faithful returned to the practice of the sacrament of Reconciliation. The Roman WYD organizers used a creative approach which proved to be very effective in renewing the sacrament. It has been studied and reflected upon.

Toronto 2002 has already made its own creative contributions. The Pilgrimage of the Holy Cross throughout that vast country has been one. For the past year its journey has impacted Canadian Catholic life and identity. It was originally entrusted to the world's young people by Pope John Paul II in 1985.

From Denver to Toronto the young pilgrims of the Catholic world have come to a new reality through the invitation of the Holy Father to join him on a WYD pilgrimage. The love that governs all things is now conceived by them only in light of the all-encompassing love of the Cross.