



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO THE PARTICIPANTS
IN THE ARCHDIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE FROM MADRID***

Monday, 4 July 2005

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I offer you my most cordial welcome at this meeting and first of all to Cardinal Antonio María Rouco Varela, Archbishop of Madrid, to his Auxiliary Bishops and to the other members of the Synod Assembly, accompanied by so many of the lay faithful who have taken part in the groups for prayer and reflection on the Synod's great theme and objective: Transmission of the faith, lived and practised within the communion of the Church.

The third Diocesan Synod ended on the Solemnity of Pentecost in this year dedicated to the Eucharist. Its aim was to renew faith and communion among the members of the Church in Madrid.

The Ecclesial Community has become aware that it is a "family in the faith", one family, through a profound and mysterious bond that unites the most different realities and converts them, by means of God's presence in this community, into a sign of unity for the whole of society.

It is a catholic community, and "catholic" means, precisely, that it is an open assembly, the depositary of a message with a universal vocation that is addressed to every human being. It is a community that harmonizes and reconciles people from different places and different backgrounds.

Today, this Catholic Community has come on pilgrimage to Rome as a sign of communion with the Successor of Peter, hence, with the universal Church.

As though at a new Pentecost, the Holy Spirit has imbued your hearts with new missionary zeal and an intense concern for those who live today in your diocesan community; people with first and last names, with worries and hopes, with their sufferings and their difficulties.

Based on the Synod experience, you have been sent to "bring glad tidings to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, recovery of sight to the blind" (Lk 4: 18). The community must bring the light of the Gospel to a society thirsting for authentic human values and suffering from so many divisions and splits, in the certainty that love is primarily a communication of truth.

To this end, the Church in Madrid desires to be present in all the fields of daily life and also in the means of social communications. This is an important aspect, for the Spirit impels us to take to every man and woman the love that God the Father revealed in Jesus Christ.

This love is caring, generous and unconditional, and is not only offered to those who listen to his message but also to those who do not know it or reject it.

Each one of the faithful must feel called, as if sent by Christ, to seek out those who have drifted away from the community, like the disciples of Emmaus who succumbed to disappointment (cf. Lk 24: 13-35). It is necessary to go to the very fringes of society to take to everyone the light of Christ's message about the meaning of life, the family and society, reaching out to those who live in the desert of neglect and poverty and loving them with the love of the Risen Christ.

In every apostolate and in Gospel proclamation, as St Paul says, "If I... have not love, I am nothing" (I Cor 13: 2).

Dear brothers and sisters, following the guidelines of the Synod, draw spiritual nourishment from prayer and an intense sacramental life; deepen your personal knowledge of Christ and make every effort to advance on the path to holiness, the "high standard of Christian living", as beloved John Paul II used to say.

May Mary Most Holy obtain total fidelity to Christ and to his Church as a gift for all the members of the Archdiocese of Madrid, and may she never fail to guide you on your post-synodal journey.

For my part, I accompany you in prayer as I impart to you with affection my Apostolic Blessing, which I extend to your whole archdiocesan community.

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