



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO A GROUP OF YOUNG PEOPLE
TAKING PART IN THE "YOUTH MISSION"
ORGANIZED BY THE ARCHDIOCESE AND THE DIOCESES
OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PROVINCE OF MADRID***

Thursday, 9 August 2007

*Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Dear young Madrileños,*

I receive you today with great joy, dear young people who have been taking part in the "Youth Mission" of the Archdiocese of Madrid and the Dioceses of this Ecclesiastical Province. You have come here accompanied by Cardinal Antonio María Rouco Varela, Archbishop of Madrid, whom I thank for his friendly words on behalf of his Auxiliary Bishops and the Bishops of Getafe and Alcalá de Henares and, of course, of you all.

You have desired to express your affection to the Pope, the Successor of the Apostle Peter, as well as your commitment of unselfish service to the Church of Jesus Christ. I offer you my most cordial welcome.

I thank you for coming here in such large numbers, and especially for all you are doing as the fruit of this intense ecclesial experience, as well as for the faith you are living in practice. Some of you have already given sincere witness to it, which particularly interests me.

I have appreciated the intensity of your missionary experience and the tone acquired by certain facets of life when the decision is made to proclaim Christ: the enthusiasm of finding out and learning with surprise that contrary to what many think, the Gospel is deeply attractive to youth; the discovery of the full breadth of the ecclesial meaning of Christian life; the finesse and beauty of love and a family lived before God's eyes, or the discovery of an unexpected call to serve him without reserve by consecrating oneself to the priestly ministry.

In visiting the places where Peter and Paul proclaimed the Gospel and gave their lives for the

Lord, and where many others were also persecuted and martyred at the dawn of the Church, you have been able to understand better why faith in Jesus Christ, in opening horizons to a new life, authentic freedom and boundless hope, needs the impetus that stems from a heart generously given to God and a courageous witness to the One who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Just as it happened here in Rome many centuries ago, in an environment in which Christ, the one Saviour of the human race and of the world, was denied, so it always happens and happens today too, when you see around you many people who have forgotten him or want nothing to do with him, blinded by the numerous transient dreams that promise many things but leave the heart empty.

I encourage you to persevere on the path on which you have set out, letting your Pastors guide you, collaborating with them in the thrilling task of bringing to your peers the indescribable good fortune to know that they are loved by God, the one love that never lets us down and never dies.

Do not cease to cultivate your own personal encounter with Christ, to keep him ever at the centre of your heart, since in this way your life will be converted into a mission; you will let Christ who lives in you shine forth.

As young people, you are on the verge of deciding on your future. Are you doing so in the light of Christ, asking him, "What do you want of me?" Are you following the path he points out to you with generosity and confidence, knowing that as baptized people we are all, without exception, called to holiness and to be living members of the Church on whatever path we take in life?

The Virgin Mary, Queen of the Apostles and Mother of the Church, was presented by the Second Vatican Council as "a model of that motherly love with which all who join in the Church's apostolic mission for the regeneration of mankind should be animated" (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 65).

May her maternal intercession accompany you and make you faithful to the commitments which, docile to the Holy Spirit, you have assumed for the glory of God and the good of your brothers and sisters. May the Apostolic Blessing which I impart to you with affection also be a help to you.

Thank you very much for visiting me.