



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO MADRID
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 26th WORLD YOUTH DAY
18-21 AUGUST 2011

MEETING WITH YOUNG WOMEN RELIGIOUS

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

Monastery of San Lorenzo de El Escorial
Friday, 19 August 2011

Dear Young Women Religious,

As part of the World Youth Day which we are celebrating in Madrid, I am delighted to have this opportunity to meet you who have consecrated your youth to the Lord, and I thank you for the kind greeting you have given me. I also thank the Archbishop of Madrid, who arranged for this meeting in the evocative setting of the Monastery of San Lorenzo de El Escorial. Its famous library preserves important editions of the sacred Scriptures and the monastic rules of various religious families, yet your own lives of fidelity to the calling you have received is itself a precious means of preserving the word of the Lord, which resounds in your various spiritual traditions.

Dear Sisters, every charism is an evangelical word which the Holy Spirit recalls to the Church's memory (cf. *Jn* 14:26). It is not by accident that consecrated life "is born from hearing the word of God and embracing the Gospel as its rule of life. A life devoted to following Christ in his chastity, poverty and obedience becomes a living 'exegesis' of God's word... Every charism and every rule springs from it and seeks to be an expression of it, thus opening up new pathways of Christian living marked by the radicalism of the Gospel" (*Verbum Domini*, 83).

This Gospel radicalism means being "rooted and built up in Christ, and firm in the faith" (cf. *Col* 2:7). In the consecrated life, this means going to the very root of the love of Jesus Christ with an

undivided heart, putting nothing ahead of this love (cf. Saint Benedict, *Rule*, IV, 21) and being completely devoted to him, the Bridegroom, as were the Saints, like Rose of Lima and Rafael Arnáiz, the young patrons of this World Youth Day. Your lives must testify to the personal encounter with Christ which has nourished your consecration, and to all the transforming power of that encounter. This is all the more important today when “we see a certain ‘eclipse of God’ taking place, a kind of amnesia which, albeit not an outright rejection of Christianity, is nonetheless a denial of the treasure of our faith, a denial that could lead to the loss of our deepest identity” (*Message for the 2011 World Youth Day*, 1). In a world of relativism and mediocrity, we need that radicalism to which your consecration, as a way of belonging to the God who is loved above all things, bears witness.

This Gospel radicalism proper to the consecrated life finds expression in filial communion with the Church, the home of the children of God, built by Christ: communion with her Pastors who set forth in the Lord’s name the deposit of faith received from the apostles, the ecclesial Magisterium and the Christian tradition; communion with your own religious families as you gratefully preserve their authentic spiritual patrimony while valuing other charisms; and communion with other members of the Church, such as the laity, who are called to make their own specific calling a testimony to the one Gospel of the Lord.

Finally, Gospel radicalism finds expression in the mission God has chosen to entrust to us: from the contemplative life, which welcomes into its cloisters the word of God in eloquent silence and adores his beauty in the solitude which he alone fills, to the different paths of the apostolic life, in whose furrows the seed of the Gospel bears fruit in the education of children and young people, the care of the sick and elderly, the pastoral care of families, commitment to respect for life, witness to the truth and the proclamation of peace and charity, mission work and the new evangelization, and so many other sectors of the Church’s apostolate.

Dear Sisters, this is the witness of holiness to which God is calling you, as you follow Jesus Christ closely and unconditionally in consecration, communion and mission. The Church needs your youthful fidelity, rooted and built up in Christ. Thank you for your generous, total and perpetual “yes” to the call of the Loved One. I pray that the Virgin Mary may sustain and accompany your consecrated youth, with the lively desire that it will challenge, nourish and illumine all young people.

With these sentiments, I ask God to repay abundantly the generous contribution which consecrated life has made to [this World Youth Day](#). In his name, and with great gratitude, I give you my affectionate blessing.

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