



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI TO YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF MADRID

Paul VI Audience Hall

Monday, 2 April 2012

*Dear Cardinal Archbishop of Madrid,
Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate and in the Priesthood,
Dear Young People,
Dear Friends,*

I thank Cardinal Antonio María Ruoco Varela for the kind words he has addressed to me, expressing the sentiments of everyone present, and I greet him with great affection. Likewise I greet the Bishops from the ecclesiastical Province of Madrid and the Bishop of San Sebastián, in charge of youth ministry in the Spanish Bishops' Conference.

I am pleased to welcome all of you who have come to the See of Peter and are participating in this pilgrimage, which you have enthusiastically organized as a 'thank you' to the Pope for his [Journey to Spain on the occasion of World Youth Day](#), celebrated last August. I cordially greet the authorities, organizers, sponsors and volunteers, and, in a special way, the young people, who are the protagonists and main beneficiaries of this initiative, strongly desired by my beloved Predecessor, [John Paul II, whose passing to Heaven we remember today](#).

Present here today are the Bishops of Spain and the episcopal delegates of the young people who collaborated in the dioceses for the successful outcome of such a ecclesial event. And I cannot fail to mention the members of the Consecrated Life and many other people and institutions who have offered their valuable and generous contribution for the success of this initiative.

Whenever I think of the [26th World Youth Day](#), my heart fills with gratitude to God for the

experience of such grace during those unforgettable days in Madrid. On arrival I was met by many displays of welcome and hospitality, combined with the faith and joy of the young people, which became eloquent signs of Christ Risen.

Dear friends, that splendid meeting can be understood only in the light of the Holy Spirit's presence in the Church. He never ceases to inspire courage in our hearts, and continuously urges us into the public forum of history, like at Pentecost, to witness to the marvels of God. You are called to cooperate in this exciting task and it is worth devoting yourselves to it wholeheartedly. Christ needs you at his side to spread and build up his Kingdom of love. This will only be possible if you see him as your best friend and give witness to him by leading a life according to the Gospel, with courage and faithfulness.

One could assume that this has nothing to do with him or that the undertaking surpasses one's abilities and talents. But it is not so. In this adventure, nothing is too much. Do not fail to ask yourselves what the Lord is calling you to do and how you can help him. Each of you has a personal vocation and he suggests it to you for your own happiness and holiness. When one is overcome by the fire of his gaze, no sacrifice seems too great in order to follow him and to give him the best of oneself. This is how the saints have always done it, by spreading the light of the Lord and the power of his love, by transforming the world until it becomes a hearth welcoming all, where God is glorified and his children blessed.

Dear young people, like the first Apostles, may you too be missionaries of Christ to your families, friends and acquaintances, in your study and work environments, among the poor and the sick. Speak of his love and of his goodness with simplicity, without complexes or fears. Christ himself will give you the strength for this. For your part, listen to him and may you enjoy a consistent and sincere relationship with him. With trust, tell him about your hopes and your aspirations, your sorrows too and those of the people you see who are in need of consolation and hope. Calling to mind those splendid days, I urge you to spare no effort that those around you may personally discover him and that they may meet the living One and with him his Church.

Yesterday, on the [Solemnity of Palm Sunday](#), we began [Holy Week](#), in which we follow in the footsteps of Christ to the celebration of his Paschal Mystery. We proclaim him the Messiah and the Son of David, waving the palms of salvation and jubilee like the children and young people of Jerusalem. At the same time, we contemplate his sorrowful passion and his humiliation unto death. I invite you, throughout these holy days, to unite yourselves entirely with our Redeemer, recalling [the solemn Way of the Cross of World Youth Day](#). In it we prayed, deeply moved, before the beauty of those sacred images, which profoundly express the mysteries of our faith. I encourage you, too, to take up your cross, and the cross of sorrow and of the sins of the world, in order to better understand Christ's love for humanity. Like this you will feel called to proclaim that God loves man and sent him his Son, not to condemn him, but that man might attain a full and meaningful life.

Dear friends, I am sure that you are already thinking of going to Rio de Janeiro, where many young people around the world want to meet, in what will undoubtedly be another milestone on the journey of the Church, ever young, which wants to broaden the horizon of the new generations with the treasure of the Gospel, the energy of life for the world. For now, let us go forward with eyes fixed on the approaching dawn of Easter. May the celebration of World Youth Day in Brazil be a new and joyful experience of Christ Risen, who leads all of humanity toward the splendour of life that proceeds from God.

May Mary Most Holy, who remained silent at the foot of her Son's Cross and waited patiently for the fulfillment of his promises, be ever for you a Mother of mercy, of life, of sweetness and of your hope. Thank you, thank you for your festive and joyful presence, dear young people. I bless you with all my heart.