



The Holy See

JUBILEE OF THE ENTERTAINMENT WORLD

HOMILY OF JOHN PAUL II

Sunday, 17 December 2000

1. *"Rejoice ... the Lord is at hand" (Phil 4: 4, 5).*

Today, the Third Sunday of Advent, is marked by *joy*: the joy of those awaiting the One who "is at hand", the God-with-us, foretold by the prophets. It is *the "great joy" of Christmas* which we have a foretaste of today; a joy which "will be for all people", because the Saviour came and will come again to visit us from on high, like the rising sun (cf. Lk 1: 78).

It is the joy of Christians, pilgrims in the world, who await with hope the glorious return of the One who, to come to our aid, emptied himself of his divine glory. It is *the joy of this Holy Year*, which commemorates the two millennia since the time when the Son of God, Light from Light, shone upon humanity's history with the radiance of his presence.

In this perspective, the words of the prophet Zephaniah, which we have just heard in the *first reading*, become particularly eloquent: "Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away the judgements against you, he has cast out your enemies" (Zep 3: 14-15): this is the "year of the Lord's favour", which heals us from sin and its wounds!

2. The prophet's consoling message echoes with great intensity in our assembly: *"The Lord your God is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love"* (Zep 3: 17).

It is he who *came* and it is he whom *we await*. The Jubilee Year invites us to fix our gaze on him, especially during this Advent of the Year 2000. The Lord, "a warrior who gives victory", is also presented to you today, dear brothers and sisters *who in various ways work in the entertainment*

world. I welcome you in his name and cordially greet you. I express my affectionate gratitude for the kind words addressed to me by Archbishop John Patrick Foley, President of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, and by your two representatives. I extend my greetings to your colleagues and friends who have been unable to attend.

3. Last Sunday, Luke's Gospel presented to us *John the Baptist*, who proclaimed on the banks of the Jordan the Messiah's imminent coming. Today the liturgy lets us hear the continuation of this Gospel passage: the Baptist explains to the crowds *how in practice to prepare the way of the Lord*. He tells the various *categories of people* who ask him: "*What then shall we do?*" (Lk 3: 10, 12, 14), what must be done to prepare themselves to welcome the Messiah.

This Gospel passage, in a certain sense, reminds us of *the Jubilee meetings for the various social or professional categories*. It also reminds us of you, dear brothers and sisters: by your Jubilee pilgrimage it is as though you too have come to ask: "What must we do?". *The first answer* that the word of God gives you is *an invitation to rediscover joy*. Is not the Jubilee - a term connected with "jubilation" - an exhortation to be full of joy, because the Lord has come to dwell among us and has given us his love?

However, this joy that flows from divine grace *is not a superficial or fleeting happiness*. It is a deep joy, rooted in the heart, which can imbue the believer's entire life. A joy that can coexist with difficulties, trials, even - however paradoxical this may seem - with pain and death. It is the joy of Christmas and Easter, the gift of the incarnate Son of God, who died and rose again; a joy that no one can take from those who are one with him in faith and works (cf. Jn 16: 22-23).

Many of you, dear friends, work *to entertain the public* in creating and producing shows that are meant to offer an opportunity for healthy relaxation and amusement. If Christian joy in its proper sense is found at a more directly spiritual level, nevertheless it also includes *the healthy enjoyment* that is good for the mind and body. Thus society should be grateful to those who produce and present intelligent and relaxing broadcasts and programmes which are entertaining without being alienating, humorous but not vulgar. Spreading authentic joy can be a genuine form of social charity.

4. The Church, then, like John the Baptist, has *a specific message for you* today, dear workers in the entertainment world. A message which could be expressed in these words: in your work, always remember *the people who are your audience*, their rights and their legitimate expectations, especially when it is a question of people who are still in formation. Do not let yourselves be influenced by mere financial or ideological interest. This is the fundamental principle of the ethics of social communications, which each of you is called to apply to his own area of activity. In this regard, the Pontifical Council for Social Communications published a specific document last June: *Ethics in Social Communications*, on which I invite you to reflect.

Particularly those among you who are better known to the public must be constantly aware of their responsibility. People look at you, dear friends, with fondness and interest. Always be positive and consistent models for them, capable of instilling trust, optimism and hope.

In order to carry out this demanding mission, the Lord comes to your aid and you can have recourse to him by listening to his word and praying. Yes, dear friends, you who work with images, gestures and sounds; in other words, you work with *the exterior*. For this very reason you must be men and women *with a strong interiority* and be capable of recollection. God dwells within us, more inward than our innermost self, as Augustine pointed out. If you know how to converse with him, you will be better able to communicate with your neighbour. If you have a keen awareness of the good, the true and the beautiful, your creative productions even the simplest, will have good aesthetic and moral quality.

5. *The Church is close to you and counts on you!* She expects you to instil in cinema, television, radio, the theatre, circuses and every form of entertainment that Gospel "leaven" which enables every human reality to develop its positive potential to the maximum.

It is impossible to think of a new evangelization that does not involve your world, the world of entertainment, which is so important in forming minds and habits. I am thinking of the many initiatives which present the Bible message and the very rich heritage of the Christian tradition in the *language* of forms, sounds and images through the theatre, cinema and television. I am also thinking of those works and programmes that are not explicitly religious but are still capable of speaking to peoples' hearts, prompting them to wonder, to question and to reflect.

6. Dear brothers and sisters! Providence has wanted your Jubilee to be celebrated *a few days before Christmas*, certainly the feast most often portrayed in your field of work at all levels, from the mass media to the living cribs. May today's meeting help us to enter into harmony with the true Christmas spirit, which is very different from the worldly spirit that makes it a commercial opportunity.

Let Mary, Mother of the Incarnate Word, guide you on your journey of preparation for this solemnity. She silently awaits the fulfilment of the divine promises and teaches us that *to bring peace and joy to the world, we must first welcome into our heart the Prince of Peace and source of joy, Jesus Christ*. For this to happen, we must be converted to his love and be ready to do his will.

I hope, dear friends of the entertainment world, that you too will have this comforting experience. In the most varied languages, you will then be *messengers of joy*, of that joy which Christ gives to all humanity at Christmas.

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