



The Holy See

MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER

TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF ISRAEL AND PALESTINA *Dear Israelis and Palestinian Young People,*

A few weeks ago, the voice of hope and satisfaction was heard around the world when your leaders signed an historic accord. Now people everywhere look to this agreement in trust and expectation, hoping that it will grow ever stronger and lead to an effective and lasting peace. You young people, and all those whom you represent, must be the first to realize the hopes of your peoples and of the world at large. The decisions you make concerning yourselves and your vocation in society will decide the prospects for peace, both today and tomorrow. Dear young Israelis and Palestinians, Jews, Muslims and Christians: I renew to you today the invitation I addressed to all young people on the occasion of the 1985 World Day of Peace, stressing the role that youth is called to play in efforts to promote peace. At the threshold of the new millennium, you must come to see more clearly that the future of peace, and therefore the future of all humanity, depends upon the fundamental choices which your generation will make. In a few years, your generation will be responsible for shaping the destiny of your peoples, your nations, and of the world. It is a moral imperative that you help to construct a new society, to build a new civilization, based ever more solidly on mutual respect, brotherhood and the spirit of cooperation. None of us is alone in this world; each of us is a vital piece of the great mosaic of humanity as a whole. Do not be afraid of the challenge which awaits you: your hope and your youthfulness will stand by you in this exacting task. But you will be able to accomplish it only if you can instill in your own hearts that peace which you plan to bring to your peoples and to the world – no longer a peace based solely on accords and agreements, however noble and necessary they may be, but a peace born from within each person. This is essential if peace is to be stable and lasting. In conclusion, I say to you in a special way what I said to the young people of the world in the Message mentioned above: “The future of peace lies in your hearts. To build history, as you can and must, you must free history from the false paths it is now pursuing. To do this, you must be people with a deep trust in man and a deep trust in the grandeur of the human vocation, a vocation to be pursued with respect for truth and for the dignity and inviolable rights of the human person”. You know that, if God wills, I plan to go to the Holy Land on a pilgrimage tracing the stages of the history of salvation. God willing, therefore, we shall have the chance to meet again on your own soil. I trust that by then you will have begun your venture and that together we will be able to see its first fruits. Good-bye until then, and may God abundantly bless your efforts. *From the Vatican, 22 september 1999*