



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II TO THE MEMBERS OF CATHOLIC ACTION YOUTH

Thursday, 21 December 2000

1. Thank you, dear young people of Catholic Action Youth, for your traditional Christmas visit. When the ACR arrives, it means that Christmas is not far off!

You have come in pairs, like Jesus' disciples, from the different regions of Italy, accompanied by a teacher for each Diocese. I greet you with deep affection and extend a special greeting to the most senior leaders who have accompanied you.

Perhaps some of you were present at the Children's Jubilee last 2 January. That was the first important meeting of the Jubilee and I remember that Catholic Action worked very hard for the event. Now, dear young people, we are almost at the end of the Holy Year. So I ask you: how have you lived these months? Of course, in comparison with a year ago, you have grown noticeably. At your age one more year is a lot and the changes are more obvious. But can you say that you have also grown as Christians? Has your friendship with Jesus become stronger and deeper?

2. The ACR has certainly helped you to grow as disciples of Christ. With your groups you have made an even lovelier, richer and more joyful journey during this Year of the Great Jubilee which will certainly be fruitful. Together with your teachers and assistants, you have decided to become even more missionary, more capable of bringing to others the joy of having met Jesus. I am pleased with this missionary effort, and I tell you once again that I set great store by your collaboration in spreading the Gospel in families, at school, in sports activities and everywhere.

For my part, I accompany you with prayer so that, like Jesus, you may grow in wisdom and grace, before God and men. This will happen if you always love Our Lady and let her guide you. May the example of the shepherd children of Fátima, Francesco and Giacinta, whom this very year I had the joy of beatifying, show once again that children have a special bond with the Virgin Mary. With her help, they can reach the peaks of holiness.

I would like to give you a piece of advice: go to Bethlehem and bring the newborn Jesus this membership card, the

"number one". He must not be left out by the ACR and the ACR must not let him down. These are my wishes for all of you gathered here.

Happy Christmas!

Thank you again, dear friends, for your visit and for your gifts. I bless you with great affection, as well as all your friends in Catholic Action, your relatives and your teachers.

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