



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI TO MEMBERS OF THE DON ORIONE FAMILY

Tuesday, 28 June 2005

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I meet you with great pleasure on the eve of the Solemnity of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul and I offer you all a cordial greeting. Thank you for being here.

First of all, I greet the Cardinals, Bishops, priests, Authorities and various personalities present. I greet in particular Fr Flavio Peloso, who was for some years at the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and is now Superior General of the Sons of Divine Providence, and Sr Maria Irene Bazzotto, Mother General of the Little Missionary Sisters of Charity, along with representatives of the Secular Institute and the Lay Movement of Don Orione, who together make up the Don Orione Family which has organized this event, desired so long ago by the Founder, St Luigi Orione himself, who said: "*St Peter's Feast is the Pope's feast day*" (*Lettere* II, 488).

I next greet Mr Ernesto Olivero, Founder of SERMIG-Arsenal of Peace, Dr Guido Bertolaso, Chief of the Department of Italian Civil Protection, and all who via television have joined this witness of filial devotion for the Pastor of the Church of Rome, who is called "*to preside in charity*" (St Ignatius of Antioch, *Epistle to the Romans*, 1, 1).

Dear friends, this evening you have given life to a special "feast day for the Pope", as Don Orione said, to bring "so many hearts to surround the Pope's heart", and thereby to renew your act of faith and love for the one whom Divine Providence has chosen to be Christ's Vicar on earth.

Together with the greeting of Fr Flavio Peloso, whom I cordially thank, I have just listened with deep attention to the words of St Luigi Orione. He speaks with vibrant affection of the Pope, recognizing his role not only in the Church but also at the service of the entire human family.

"*You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church*" (Mt 16: 18). Jesus addresses Peter with these words after his profession of faith. He was the same disciple who was later to deny Christ. So why is Peter described as "rock"?

Certainly not because of his personal solidity. "Rock" is rather a *nomen officii*: in other words, not a title of merit but of service, which defines a calling and a responsibility of divine origin for which no one is equipped simply by virtue of his own character.

Peter, foundering, who sank in the waters of the Lake of Tiberias, becomes the rock on which the divine Master built his Church. This is the faith that you want to reaffirm by renewing your attachment to the Successor of Peter.

I am sure that this joyful and varied musical and spiritual performance which has brought you together from various nations of the world will help you to grow in love and fidelity to the Church and in docile obedience to her Pastors, following the teachings and example of your holy Founder. The Pope is grateful to you for your prayers, which I need, and for your affection, and expresses his appreciation for the many initiatives of good that you carry out with an ecclesial spirit in Italy and throughout the world. "*Works of charity are essential*", St Luigi Orione asserted; "*they are the best apology of the Catholic faith*" (*Scritti*, 4, 280). Indeed, they express, and in a certain way reveal, in human history the grace of salvation, of which the Church is a sacrament for the entire human race.

This evening you have wished to focus on a particular aspect of the ministry of the Successor of Peter, that of being a "messenger of peace". It is a specific task that is linked to the statement that Jesus bequeathed to his Apostles in the Upper Room: "*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you*" (Jn 14: 27).

The Church's commitment to peace is first and foremost of a spiritual nature. It consists of showing Jesus present, the Risen One, the Prince of Peace, and of educating in the faith, from whose sources flow fertile energies of peace and reconciliation. We must thank God for the thoughts and works of peace that the Christian Communities, Religious Institutes and Volunteer Associations are developing with such vitality in all parts of the world.

How can I not make the most of your presence to pay homage to the many silent "peacemakers", who through their witness and sacrifice are doing their utmost to further dialogue among men and women, to overcome every form of conflict and division, to make our earth a homeland of peace and brotherhood for all? "*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God*" (Mt 5: 9). How timely and necessary this Beatitude is!

Persevere, dear friends, each one in your own province and in accordance with your own possibilities, in offering your collaboration for the safeguard of the dignity of every person, for the

defence of human life in the service of a determined action of authentic peace in every social milieu.

I address this invitation especially to you, dear young people, whom I see are very numerous.

Thank you for your commitment. My beloved Predecessor John Paul II, whose process of Beatification begins this very day, used to like to repeat that you young people are the hope and future of the Church and of humanity. In the heart of each one, therefore, may the desire to give life to a world of true and stable peace never cease to grow.

I entrust these hopes to the intercession of St Luigi Orione and especially to the Virgin Mary, Queen of peace. May it be she who blesses and comforts the generous efforts of all those who dedicate themselves unsparingly to building peace on the strong pillars of truth, justice, freedom and love. I accompany these vows with the assurance of a special remembrance in prayer, as I impart a heartfelt Apostolic Blessing to you all.

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