



The Holy See

ROSARY WITH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

*Paul VI Audience Hall
Saturday, 11 March 2006*

Dear Young University Students,

At the end of the Prayer of the Holy Rosary, with great joy I address my cordial greetings to you all, gathered here in the Vatican and at the same time in Madrid, Nairobi, Owerri, Abidjan, Dublin, Salamanca, Munich, Fribourg, St Petersburg and Sofia, as well as in Antananarivo and Bonn. With you I greet and thank the venerable Pastors who are with you and, linked up with us, are guiding your prayer. This is a beautiful sign of the Catholic Church's communion.

I likewise thank the Choir and the Orchestra as well as the various bodies that have organized this event: Vatican Television Centre, Vatican Radio, Telespace, the Foreign and University Ministries and the Province and Municipality of Rome.

This Marian Vigil, dear to Pope John Paul II, builds bridges of brotherhood between the young university students of Europe and this evening extends them to the interior of the great Continent of Africa, so that communion will grow among the new generations and the civilization of love will be spread.

I therefore desire to reach out to the friends who are linked up with us in Africa with a special affectionate embrace that I would like to extend to all the beloved African Peoples.

Dear young university students who have gathered in Madrid and Salamanca, may the Virgin Mary help you to witness to God's love among your friends and companions.

My dear friends gathered in Nairobi, Owerri and Dublin, may Mary, Seat of Wisdom, teach you

always to integrate truth and love in your studies and in your lives!

Dear young friends in Munich and Bonn, draw divine Love from Christ's Heart and express it in concrete acts of service to your brothers and sisters. May the Virgin Mary accompany you and help you in this!

Dear students of Fribourg and Abidjan, under the motherly guidance of Mary, always follow Jesus on the path of love, making a generous gift of your lives.

Dear friends in St Petersburg, may the Holy Mother of God accompany you on your journey of formation, so that you can embark on your professional activity motivated by Christian love.

Dear young people of Sofia, God is love: may this fundamental truth of the Christian faith always illumine your studies and your whole life.

Dear friends, in a little while I will be presenting my Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* to some of your representatives. Thus, symbolically, I intend to offer it to all the students of Europe and of Africa, with the hope that the fundamental truth of the Christian faith - God is love - may light the way for each one of you and shine out through your witness to your student companions.

This truth about the love of God, the beginning, meaning and end of the universe and of history, was revealed by Jesus Christ with his words and with his life, culminating in his death and Resurrection at Easter. It is at the root of Christian wisdom which, like yeast, can cause every human culture to ferment, so that it may express the best of itself and may cooperate in the development of a more just and peaceful world.

Dear university students, in presenting the Encyclical to you, I also recommend my Message for the 21st World Youth Day that we will be celebrating on Palm Sunday. I dedicated this Message to the importance of the Word of God, and therefore took the title from the verse of Psalm 119[118] which says: "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (v. 105).

In preparation for Palm Sunday, I invite you to the traditional meeting for all young people that will take place on Thursday afternoon, 6 April, in St Peter's Square. Let us take up the pilgrim Cross that comes from Cologne and remember with a grateful heart, a year after his death, my great Predecessor, John Paul II.

May Mary, Seat of Wisdom, obtain for you this Lent a profound spiritual renewal, so that you can always live and offer your studies for the glory of God. To this end I assure you that I will continue to remember you in my prayers, as I cordially bless all of you and your relatives.

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