



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI TO THE CHILDREN OF ITALIAN CATHOLIC ACTION

Consistory Hall

Saturday, 20 December 2008

Dear Children of ACR,

I am very happy that this year too. With the nearing of holy Christmas you have come with your presence to cheer these solemn buildings, in which nonetheless there is always the joy of serving the Lord. I greet together with you, your teachers, the President of the Italian Catholic Action, the General Chaplain and your new National Chaplain, Fr Dino.

Many people say that children are capricious, that they are never happy with anything, that they consume toys, one after another, without being satisfied by them. You, on the other hand, say to Jesus: You are enough for me! Which means: you are our dearest friend who keeps us company when we play and when we go to school, when we are at home with our parents, our grandparents, our little brothers and sisters, and when we go out with our friends. You open our eyes so that we notice our sad companions and the many children in the world who are suffering hunger, illness and war. You are enough for us, Lord Jesus, you give us true joy, the joy that does not end like our games but is poured out into our souls and makes us good. You are enough, especially, when we pray to you because you always hear the prayers we say for the world to become more beautiful and a better place for everyone. You are enough for us, because you forgive us when we get into some mischief; you are enough for us because if we are lost you come to find us and carry us in your arms as you did with the lost sheep. You are enough for us, because you have a most beautiful Mother whom, before dying on the Cross, you wanted to make our Mother too.

Dear little friends, do you also want to help your companions to be like this with Jesus? A boy or girl of ACR is one who when going to Jesus likes to bring some friends because they want him to know them too; they do not only think of themselves but have large hearts, attentive to others. You

have so many teachers who help you to live together, to pray and to grow in your knowledge of the Gospel. Catholic Action's true aim is to help you to become holy; for this reason it helps you to encounter Jesus and to love his Church and be concerned with the world's problems. Is it not perhaps true that you are involving yourselves with children and boys and girls who are less fortunate than you? Is it not perhaps true that with the "month of peace" you can also make many adults appreciate peace because you yourselves know how to live peacefully with one another?

Yes, dear boys and girls, you can pray the Lord to change the hearts of the weapons manufacturers, to bring the terrorists back to reason, to convert hearts that are always bent on war and help humanity to build a better future for all the world's children. I am sure that you will also pray for me, thus helping me in the difficult task the Lord has entrusted to me. As for me, I assure you of my affection and my prayers, while I now gladly bless you together with all your loved ones. A Happy Christmas to you, to your families and to all the boys and girls of Catholic Action!

© Copyright 2008 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

Copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana