



The Holy See

PASTORAL VISIT TO TURIN

MEETING WITH THE YOUNG PEOPLE

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

St. Charles Square

Fifth Sunday of Easter, 2 May 2010

(Video)

Dear Young People of Turin,

Dear Young People who have come from Piedmont and the surrounding regions,

I am truly glad to be with you on this Visit to Turin to Venerate the Holy Shroud. I greet all of you with great affection and I thank you for your welcome and the enthusiasm of your faith. Through you, I greet all the young people of Turin and of the Dioceses of Piedmont, with a special prayer for those who are in situations of suffering, difficulty or confusion. I address a special thought and strong encouragement to those of you who are following the path to the priesthood, to the consecrated life or to generous decisions in the service of the lowliest. I thank your Pastor, Cardinal Severino Poletto, for the cordial words he has addressed to me, and I thank your representatives who have presented to me the proposals, problems and expectations of the young people of this City and this region.

Twenty-five years ago, on the occasion of the World Youth Day, Venerable and Beloved John Paul II wrote an Apostolic Letter to the young people of the world, focused on Jesus' encounter with the rich young man in the Gospel (*Apostolic Letter to the Youth of the World*, 31 March 1985). Precisely on the basis of this Gospel passage (cf. Mk 10: 17-22; Mt 19: 16-22) which was also the subject of my Reflection for this year's Message for the World Youth Day, I wish to offer some thoughts that I hope may help you in your spiritual growth and in your mission within the Church

and in the world.

The young man in the Gospel as we know asks Jesus: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?". Today it is not easy to speak about eternal life and eternal realities, because the mentality of our time tells us that nothing is definitive that everything changes, and changes very rapidly. "Change", in many cases, has become the password, the most exalting exercise of freedom, and that is why even you, young people, have often come to think that it is impossible to make definitive choices that would tie you down for the rest of your life. But is this the right way to use your freedom? Is it really true that in order to be happy we should content ourselves with small, transient joys that once they are over leave bitterness in the heart? Dear young people, this is not true freedom nor can true happiness be reached in this way. Not one of us is created to make provisional and revocable choices but rather definitive and irrevocable decisions that give full meaning to our existence. We see it in our lives: we should like every beautiful experience that fills us with happiness never to end. God created us with a view to the "forever", he has placed in the heart of each one of us the seed of a life that can achieve something beautiful and great. Have the courage to make definitive decisions and to live them faithfully! The Lord may call you to marriage, to the priesthood, to the consecrated life, to a special gift of yourselves: answer him generously!

In the dialogue with the young man who possessed many riches Jesus pointed out what was the most important, the greatest treasure in life: love. To love God and to love others with one's whole self. The word love we know it lends itself to many interpretations and has different meanings. We need a Teacher, Christ, to teach us its most authentic and profound meaning, to guide us to the source of love and life. Love is the name of God himself. The Apostle John reminds us: "God is love", and adds, "not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son", and "if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (1 Jn 4: 8, 10-11) In the encounter with Christ and in reciprocal love we experience in ourselves the life of God, who abides in us with his perfect, total and eternal love (cf. 1 Jn 4: 12). Therefore there is nothing greater for man a mortal and limited being than to participate in the life of God's love. Today, we live in a cultural context that does not encourage profound and disinterested human relationships; on the contrary, it often induces us to withdraw into ourselves, into individualism, to let selfishness, that exists in people, prevail. But a young person's heart is by nature sensitive to true love. That is why I address each one of you with great confidence in order to say: it is not easy to make something beautiful and great of your life it is demanding, but with Christ, everything is possible!

In the gaze of Jesus, who, as the Gospel tells us, looked lovingly at the young man, we perceive God's desire to be with us, to be near us. God desires our "yes", our love. Yes, dear young people, Jesus wants to be your friend, your brother in life, the teacher who shows you the way to follow to attain happiness. He loves you for what you are, in your frailty and your weakness, so that, touched by his love, you may be transformed. Live this encounter with Christ's love in a strong personal relationship with him. Live it in the Church, first and foremost in the Sacraments. Live it in the Eucharist, in which his Sacrifice is made present: he truly gives his Body and Blood for us, to

redeem humanity's sins so that we may become one with him, so that we too may learn the logic of giving ourselves. Live it in Confession where, in offering us his forgiveness, Jesus accepts us with all our limitations in order to give us a new heart that can love as he does. Learn and become familiar with the word of God and meditate upon it, especially in *Lectio Divina*, the spiritual reading of the Bible. Lastly, learn to find Christ's love in the Church's testimony of charity. Turin's history offers you splendid examples: follow them, making a practical experience of service freely given. Everything in the ecclesial community should be aimed at making people feel tangibly the infinite charity of God.

Dear friends, Christ's love for the young man of the Gospel is the same love that he has for each one of you. It is not a love confined to the past, it is not an illusion, it is not reserved for a few. You will encounter this love and will experience all its fruitfulness if you seek the Lord sincerely and live with commitment your participation in the life of the Christian community. May each one of you feel "a living part" of the Church, engaging without fear in her work of evangelization, in a spirit of sincere harmony with your brothers and sisters in the faith and in communion with your Pastors, leaving behind every individualistic tendency, also in living out faith, in order to breathe deeply the beauty of being part of the great mosaic of Christ's Church.

This evening I cannot fail to point out to you as a model a young man of your City Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, the 20th anniversary of whose Beatification falls this year. His life was completely enveloped by God's grace and love and was spent with serenity and joy in the enthusiastic service of Christ and of his brothers and sisters. Young like you, he experienced his Christian formation with deep commitment and gave his testimony of faith, simply and effectively. A young man who was drawn by the beauty of the Gospel of the Beatitudes, who experienced to the full the joy of being a friend of Christ, of following him, of feeling that he himself was a living part of the Church. Dear young people, have the courage to choose what is essential in life! "Living, and not just managing to get by!", Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati often used to say. Like him, you will discover that it is worth committing yourself to God and with God, to answer his call in your fundamental and your daily decisions, even at a cost!

The spiritual journey of Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati reminds us that the journey of Christ's disciples demands the courage to come out of oneself, to follow the path of the Gospel. You live this demanding path of the spirit in your parishes and in other ecclesial realities. You also live it during the pilgrimage of the [World Youth Days](#), an event that is always eagerly awaited. I know that you are preparing for the next great meeting, scheduled to take place in Madrid in August 2011. I hope with all my heart that this extraordinary event, in which I hope that large numbers of you will participate, will help to increase in each one of you enthusiasm and faithfulness in following Christ and accepting his message with joy as the source of new life.

Young people of Turin and Piedmont, be witnesses of Christ in our time! May the Holy Shroud be an invitation, especially for you, to impress in your minds God's Face of love, so that you

yourselves, in your own circles and among your contemporaries, may be a credible expression of the Face of Christ. May Mary, whom you venerate in your Marian shrines, and St John Bosco, Patron of young people, help you to follow Christ without ever tiring. May you always be accompanied by my prayers and my Blessing, which I impart to you with deep affection. Thank you for your attention!

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