



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC VISIT TO CANADA JOHN PAUL II *ANGELUS*

Cathedral of Saint Mary (Winnipeg)

Sunday, 16 September 1984

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

1. At this midday hour, we gather in the Cathedral of Saint Mary to pray the *Angelus* together. The Lord invites us to pause for a moment, and, in the company of the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints, to ponder the mystery of the Redemption and to lift our voices in praise of the Most Holy Trinity. It is a joy to be with you here in Winnipeg, and especially to join in prayer with the local Catholic community. I greet you all in the peace and love of Christ, and I extend cordial greetings to all the beloved people of this city and of the Province of Manitoba.

In the Gospel of this Twenty-fourth Sunday of Ordinary Time, Peter asks Jesus the questions: "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven" (*Matth.* 18, 21-22).

"Seventy times seven": with this reply the Lord wants to make it clear to Peter and to us that we should set no limit to our forgiveness of others. Just as the Lord is always be ready to forgive us, so we must always be ready to forgive one another. And how great is the need for forgiveness and reconciliation in our world today - indeed in our communities and families, in our very own hearts! That is why the special sacrament of the Church for forgiveness, the Sacrament of Penance, is such a precious gift from the Lord.

2. In the Sacrament of Penance, God extends his forgiveness to us in a very personal way. Through the ministry of the priest, we come to our loving Saviour with the burden of our sins. We confess that we have sinned against God and our neighbour. We manifest our sorrow and ask for pardon from the Lord. Then, through the priest, we hear Christ say to us: "Your sins are forgiven" (*Marc.* 2, 5); "Go, and do not sin again" (*Io.* 8, 11). Can we not also hear him say to us as we are filled with his saving grace: "Extend to others, seventy times seven, this same forgiveness and

mercy"?

3. This is the work of the Church in every age - it is the duty of each one of us - "to profess and proclaim God's mercy in all its truth" (Ioannis Pauli PP. II, *Dives in Misericordia*, 13), to extend to whomever we meet each day the same unlimited forgiveness that we have received from Christ. We practice mercy, too, when we "bear with one another charitably, in complete selflessness, gentleness and patience" (*Eph.* 4, 2). And God's mercy is also shown by generous and untiring service, like that required in offering health care for the sick or in carrying out medical research with persevering dedication.

On this day of the Lord when we celebrate the fullest expression of God's abundant mercy - the Cross and Resurrection of Christ - let us praise our God who is rich in mercy. And, in imitation of his great love, let us forgive anyone who may have hurt us in any way. With the Blessed Mother of God, we proclaim the mercy of God which extends from generation to generation.

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