



The Holy See

GENERAL AUDIENCE OF JOHN PAUL II

Wednesday 11 September 2002

Give young people hope for the future

1. Today from every corner of the globe countless persons go in thought to the city of New York, where last year on 11 September the twin towers of the World Trade Center collapsed as the result of a savage attack, taking with them in their ruin many of our innocent brothers and sisters.

At the distance of a year, once again we wish to remember the victims of this terrorism and commend them to the mercy of God. At the same time, we desire to renew our expression of spiritual closeness to their families and their loved ones. But we also wish to present a challenge to the consciences of those who planned and executed such a barbaric and cruel design.

One year after 11 September 2001, we state again that no situation of injustice, no sentiment of frustration, no philosophy or religion can justify such a deadly assault. Every human person has the right to respect for his own life and dignity which are inviolable goods. God says it, international law sanctions it, the human conscience proclaims it, civil coexistence demands it.

2. Terrorism is and will always be a manifestation of inhuman ferocity which, as such, will never be able to resolve the conflicts between human persons. Destruction, armed violence, and war are choices that sow and generate only hatred and death. Reason and love are the only valid means for overcoming and resolving the disputes between persons and peoples.

However, an agreed upon and resolute effort is necessary and urgent to advance new political and economic initiatives that are capable of resolving the scandalous situations of injustice and oppression that continue to afflict a great many of the members of the human family, creating conditions that favour the uncontrollable explosion of rancour. When fundamental rights are violated, it is easy to fall prey to the temptations of hatred and violence. A global culture of

solidarity has to be built that will give young people hope for the future.

3. I would like to repeat to all the words of the Bible: "The Lord ... comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world with justice and the peoples with his truth" (Ps 96[95],13).

Freedom and peace can only come from truth and justice. Only on these values is it possible to build a life worthy of human beings. Without them there is only ruin and destruction.

On this sad anniversary, we address our prayer to God so that love may supplant hatred and, through the dedication of all persons of good will, harmony and solidarity may be affirmed in every corner of the globe.

At the end of his talk, the Holy Father then gave a summary to the pilgrims in various languages. To the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors he said:

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today our thoughts turn to the terrible events of 11 September last year, symbolized in the destruction of the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York, with the death of so many innocent people.

We address an ardent prayer to Almighty God for the victims of that terrorist act. No situation of pain, no philosophy or religion, can ever justify such a grave offence against human life and dignity. Violence can only lead to further hatred and destruction. It can never lead to correct solutions to the scandalous imbalances and injustices existing in the world.

The Lord judges the world with justice and truth (cf. Ps 95,13). May he help all peoples to seek the justice and truth that brings freedom and peace.

I extend a special welcome to the Benedictine Nuns and Sisters present. May you successfully assimilate the passing concerns of the world into the profound God-centred spirituality which has always been the life of your Order.

Upon all the English-speaking visitors and pilgrims, especially those from England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Malta, Malaysia and the United States of America, I invoke the abundant grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He extended a special greeting to the young people, the sick and the newly-wed, encouraging the latter in their daily efforts to live like the family of Nazareth.

Holy Father

Brothers and sisters, the memory of the tragic events of human history cannot darken our confidence in the infinite goodness and faithfulness of God. His unchanging will of love and peace revealed in the dying and risen Christ, is the foundation of sure hope for all persons and peoples.

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, we beg you, hear us.

English

1. For the victims of violence and terrorism, and in particular for those who were cruelly snatched from their loved ones a year ago today, that they may be welcomed to the banquet of life, where there will be no more weeping, mourning or anxiety. Let us ask too that the living may not lack the comfort of faith and fraternal support.

French

2. For the Church, sign and instrument of unity for the human race, so that, through the preaching and witness of the Gospel, she may spread, nourish and sustain the hope of all men of good will, directing their steps along the ways of justice and peace.

Arabic

3. For the believers of all religions, so that in the name of God, the merciful and the lover of peace, they may reject firmly every form of violence and be dedicated to resolving conflicts with sincere and patient dialogue, respecting the different historical, cultural and religious experiences.

Spanish

4. For the children and young people, who are the hope of the new millennium, so that, by means of examples and models of genuine human dignity, they may be helped to build the civilization of love and peace, in a world in which human rights are defended and the goods of the earth are everywhere distributed with justice.

Holy Father

Holy Father, God of infinite mercy, have mercy on so many injustices that sully the conscience of

the human race. Pour into the heart of every man and woman the powerful breath of your Holy Spirit so that, together, day by day, they may grow in harmony and form a great family where all will be welcomed and recognized as your sons and daughters. We ask it through Jesus Christ, Son of the Immaculate Virgin, our Lord, who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.