



The Holy See

CELEBRATION OF THE HOLY MASS
FOR THE CONGREGATION OF THE LEGIONARIES OF CHRIST

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

28 June 1979

Beloved Sons, Legionaries of Christ,

On the day on which the liturgy commemorates the feast of a great ecclesial figure, St Irenaeus, we gather before this Lourdes grotto, beside the altar of the Lord, to offer him with the Eucharist the tribute of our thanksgiving, our supplicant praise, and our renewed faithfulness.

Knowing the place of origin of the vast majority of you, the Pope cannot help remembering and reliving so many unforgettable moments spent in your homeland, Mexico; your enthusiasm brings back to me the echo of those multitudes, affectionately close and acclaiming.

Contemplating in front of me so many members of your religious family accompanied by your Founder, the words of Genesis which we have just read in the first lesson of this Mass come to my mind. They speak to us of God's assistance, which multiplies offspring with the favour of his blessing. It was also the Lord's blessing that has caused that Foundation of the not far distant year 1941 to germinate fruitfully. Having obtained the decree of praise barely fourteen years ago, this Foundation today has more than 130 priests and nearly 700 members. Distributed in different houses and nations, they are already working, or preparing to do so, to spread the kingdom of Christ in society, through various forms of specific apostolate.

You are, beloved sons, a young religious family, in search of growing dynamism in order to offer the Church a new contribution of living energies at the present moment. Just because I know these ideals of yours, my voice wishes to call upon you, with the evangelical tones to which we

have just listened, to imitate the prudent man who built his house on rock.

For you who have as your characteristic feature Christocentric spirituality, to build your individual and community construction on rock will mean endeavouring to grow always in sublime knowledge of Christ, looking to him in order to mould his message in your lives, and firmly rooted in faith and charity in order to be capable of looking after Christ's interests at every moment. In this way you will be able, to acquire that interior strength which defies the rain, the floods, and the winds (cf. Mt 7:25), in order to construct the kingdom of God in present-day society, among the young with whom you often work and who are in such need of lived certainties, certainties derived from unshakeable faith and confidence in Christ. The Christ-God dead and risen again, becomes a principle of new life for us, who is always at our side as a guarantee of victory over adversity.

An important part of this strength in your lives will likewise be full faithfulness to the Church and to the [Second Vatican Council](#), without deviations of any kind, but in perfect consistency with what the Lord asks of us and the Magisterium proposes at the present time.

Along this way, you will be greatly helped by deeper faithfulness to those great loves that must be an attribute, in accordance with your own vocation, of every Legionary: love of the crucified Christ and love of the Blessed Virgin. If you are faithful to this beautiful programme, you need not fear: your spiritual building rests on firm foundations.

In order that you may remain faithful to these ideals, I wish to remind you to have recourse frequently to prayer. It is the only way of renewing oneself inwardly, of acquiring new light that will direct one's steps, of propping up personal weakness with the strength and solidity of divine power. In a word: it is the only way to keep a perennial spiritual youth, in availability for God and for others.

Only in this way will you be able to live fully the overflowing joy of your vocation as persons chosen for the service of Christ and of the Church. A joy which is witness to the presence of the Lord and which encourages generous dedication to one's brother. This is the wish I leave to you, expressing it in words taken from today's liturgy: "Lord, remember me when you show your kindness for your people; visit me when you operate salvation, so that I may see the happiness of your elect, rejoice with the joy of your people, and glory in your heritage."

A final word. I know that among you are the students who during my stay in Mexico offered their generous and enthusiastic collaboration at the Apostolic Delegation. Let the testimony of my deep appreciation and gratitude go to them. I also extend the same sentiments, in the presence of their Sisters resident in Rome, to the Poor Clares of the Blessed Sacrament, who gave their help unstintingly at Mexico City during my stay at the same Pontifical Representation.

And now, let us bring all these intentions to the altar of the Lord.

© Copyright 1979 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

Copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana