



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY
TO THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC,
MEXICO AND THE BAHAMAS

**MEETING WITH THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS OF
THE "MIGUEL ANGEL" INSTITUTE**

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

Tuesday, 30 January 1979

Dear Young People,

I am happy to be able to meet you today in this Catholic school, the "Miguel Angel" institute. You form a large group of all ages, both you who study in this institute and you who come from other Catholic schools. I see and feel to be present in your youth all the students of the country. I greet you all with special affection, because I see in you the promising hope of the Church and of the Mexican nation of the future.

I also wish to greet affectionately your teachers, the representatives of the institutes of formation and of fathers of a family. You all deserve my respect because you are all engaged in forming the new generations.

1. The difficulties that Catholic schools in Mexico have been able to overcome in carrying out their mission is another reason for my gratitude to the Lord and, at the same time it is a stimulus for your responsibility, in order that the Catholic school may complete the integral formation of future citizens on a really human and Christian basis.

"The Church, as regards her specific mission, must promote and impart Christian education, to which all the baptized are entitled so that they may reach the maturity of faith. As the servant of all

men, the Church tries to collaborate through her members, especially laity, in tasks of human cultural advancement, in all forms that interest society." (Medellín. *Education*, n. 9.)

2. The Church contemplates youth with optimism and deep hope. You, the young, represent the majority of the Mexican population, fifty per cent of which are under twenty years of age. In the most difficult moments of Christianity in Mexican history, the young have borne witness heroically and generously.

The Church sees in youth an enormous innovatory force, which our predecessor John XXIII considered a symbol of the Church herself, called to a constant renewal of herself, that is, to an incessant rejuvenation.

Prepare for life with seriousness and diligence. At this moment of youth, so important for the full maturing of your personality, always give an adequate place to the religious element in your formation, the one that brings man to attainment of his full dignity, which is that of being a son of God. Always remember that only if one builds, as St Paul says, on the one foundation which is Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Cor 3:11), will one be able to construct something really great and lasting.

3. As a memory of this meeting, so cordial and joyful, I wish to leave you a concrete consideration.

With the vivacity that is characteristic of your age, with the generous enthusiasm of your young hearts, walk towards Christ. He alone is the solution to all your problems. He alone is the way, the truth, and the life; he alone is the real salvation of the world; he alone is the hope of mankind.

Seek Jesus; endeavouring to acquire a deep personal faith that will inform and direct your whole life. But, above all, let it be your commitment and your programme to love Jesus, with a sincere, authentic, and personal love. He must be your friend and your support along the path of life. He alone has words of eternal life (cf. Jn 6:68).

Your thirst for the absolute cannot be quenched with ideological substitutes that lead to hatred, violence, and despair. Christ alone, sought and loved with sincere love, is a source of joy, serenity, and peace.

But after having met Christ, after having discovered who he is, you cannot fail to feel the necessity of proclaiming him. Be real witnesses of Christ; live and proclaim your faith with deeds and with words.

You, beloved young people, must have the concern and the desire to be bearers of Christ to this modern society, which needs him more than ever, which is more than ever in search of him, in spite of the fact that appearances sometimes induce us to believe the contrary.

"Young people who are well trained in faith and prayer", wrote my predecessor Paul VI in the exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, "must become more and more the apostles of youth." (n. 72.)

Each of you has the stirring task of being a proclaimer of Christ among your schoolmates and playmates. Each of you must have in your heart the desire to be an apostle among those around you.

4. I now wish to confide in you a problem that is very near my heart. The Church is aware of the underdevelopment that exists in many areas of the Latin American continent and your country. My predecessor Paul VI, in his encyclical *Populorum Progressio* affirmed: "...basic education is the primary object of any plan of development" (n. 35).

In the accelerated dynamics of change, characteristic of modern society, it is necessary and sometimes urgent for us to be able to create an atmosphere of human and Christian solidarity round the difficult problem of schooling. The Council already recalled this in its Document on Education: "All men of whatever race, condition or age, in virtue of their dignity as human persons, have an inalienable right to education" (*Gravissimum Educationis*, 1).

It is not possible to remain indifferent before the serious problem of illiteracy or semi-illiteracy.

At one of the decisive moments for the future of Latin America, I make strong appeal in Christ's name to all men and, particularly, to you young people, to give, today and tomorrow, your help, service, and collaboration, in this task of schooling. My voice, my fatherly supplication, goes also to Christian educators in order that, with their contribution, they may promote literacy campaigns and "culturalization" with a complete view of man. Let us not forget that "an illiterate is a person with an undernourished mind" (*Populorum Progressio*, 35).

I trust in the collaboration of all to help to solve this problem which regards such an essential right of the human being.

Young people! Commit yourselves as men and Christians to things that deserve effort, disinterestedness, and generosity. The Church expects it from you and trusts you!

5. Let us place this intention at the feet of Mary, whom Mexicans invoke as Our Lady of Guadalupe. She was closely associated with the mystery of Christ and is an example of generous love and dedication to the service of others. Her life of deep faith is the way to strengthen our faith and it teaches us to meet God in the deep recesses of our being.

Youth Associations and groups of friends, on returning home, tell everyone that the Pope counts on the young. Say that the young are the strength and the consolation of the Pope, who wishes to be with them so that they may hear his voice of encouragement amid all the difficulties that integration in society involves.

May the apostolic blessing which I willingly impart to you, to your dear ones, and to all those

dedicated to your formation, help you and stimulate you to carry out your resolutions.

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