



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE ROMAN PARISH OF "SAN BASILIO"

Sunday, 11 March 1979

Dear Boys,

This meeting reserved for you young people is a great joy for me. It takes place here in your sports field, where you meet for play and for training, and where, above all, you can get to know one another and form ties of brotherhood and friendship. You, too, young people of this parish, who are part of the immense diocese of Rome, are entrusted to my pastoral responsibility and to my love as Father and Pastor! And you can imagine how much I feel this solicitude and this love for you, together with the Cardinal Vicar and your priests!

Seeing that you face life so full of hope and expectations, it is impossible not to be moved and, at the same time, also thoughtful and concerned about your future. What shall I say to you then, which can assure you of the joy that Jesus has brought you and which no one can take away from you?

1. First of all I tell you that Jesus loves you! This is the most beautiful and consoling truth! This is the truth that the Vicar of Christ proclaims to you: Jesus loves you!

I hope that there are so many persons who love you and I earnestly trust that each one of you is happy, finding kindness, affection and understanding in all and from all. But we must also be realistic and keep in mind the human situation as it is. And so it may often happen that one feels in one's heart a sense of emptiness, melancholy, sadness and discontent. One may even have everything, but lack joy! Above all, it is terrible to see so much suffering, so much poverty, so much violence.

Well, just in this drama of existence and of human history, the message of the Gospel resounds

perennially: Jesus loves you! Jesus came to this earth to reveal to us and to guarantee to us God's love. He came to love us and to be loved. Let yourselves be loved by Christ!

Jesus is not only an outstanding figure of human history, a hero, a representative man: He is the Son of God; as the sensational event of the Transfiguration, of which the Gospel of today's Mass speaks to us, reminds us; he is Immanuel, the God with us, the Divine friend who alone has words of Eternal Life! He is the light in darkness; he is our joy because we know that he loves each of us, personally. "What then shall we say to this?"—St Paul wrote to the Romans—"If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all,... Is it Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us?..." (Rom 8:31-34).

Always, but especially at moments of confusion and anguish, when life and the world itself seem to collapse, do not forget the words of Jesus: "Come to me, all who labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Mt 11:28-30).

Do not forget that Jesus willed to remain present, personally and really, in the Eucharist, an immense mystery but a sure reality, in order to materialize authentically this individual and salvific love of his! Do not forget that Jesus willed to come to meet you by means of his ministers, the Priests!

2. I wish to tell you, furthermore, that we are awaited for Eternal Love in Paradise!

We must think of Paradise! We play the card of our Christian life staking it on Paradise! This certainty and this expectation does not distract us from our earthly commitments; on the contrary, it purifies and intensifies them, as the lives of all the Saints prove.

Our life is a path towards Paradise, where we will be loved and will love for ever in a complete and perfect way. We are born only to go to Paradise.

The thought of Paradise must make you strong against temptations, committed to your religious and moral formation, watchful with regard to the environment in which you must live, confident that, if you are united with Christ, you will triumph over every difficulty.

A great French poet, converted in his youth, Paul Claudel, wrote: "The Son of God did not come to destroy suffering, but to suffer with us. He did not come to destroy the cross, but to stretch out on it. He taught us the way to emerge from pain and the possibility of its transformation" (*Positions et propositions*).

I beseech the Blessed Virgin to accompany you with her protection. May she who gave the Saviour to the world, help you to prepare well for the mission to the people which will take place next October in this parish of yours. Let this moment of grace not pass in vain for each of you. Receive with these wishes my affectionate Apostolic Blessing.

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