



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO KOREA, PAPUA NEW GUINEA,
SOLOMON ISLANDS AND THAILAND **ADDRESS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II**
TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE "Changchungdong" Sport Palace - Seoul (Korea)
Sunday, 6 May 1984

Dear young people of Seoul, dear young people of Korea,

1. I am so happy to meet you and to embrace you in the love of Jesus Christ our Lord.

I am happy to meet you precisely because *you are young*. For to be young means being able to appreciate sincerity. It means searching for the path to a life that is worthwhile. To be young is to be attracted to truth, justice, freedom, peace, beauty and goodness. To be young means being eager to live, but to live joyfully, meaningfully: to live a life worth living.

To be young means to be *full of ideals and hopes*. It also means to experience loneliness, and the fear that these precious hopes may not be fulfilled. And the more you love life, the greater your hopes, the greater too sometimes are your fears. Because what is at stake is too important to be lost: the one life that God gave you, which no one else can live for you. To be a young Christian is all this and more: it means *to be alive in Christ!*

2. You have chosen as the theme of this meeting: "God - I - People". These are important words. But for you they are more than words. They pose questions filled with hope and anguish. They are the great challenges and aspirations on which the outcome of your lives depends. That is why you want to speak about these subjects, inquire about them, pray about them, and do something about them - alone, with others, with God.

As typical young people, you have important questions about life: life at home, in school, in the wider context of adult society. There are many things in your own lives that trouble you: why must school be a place of such pitiless competition? Why is there such a difference between what you are told at home and what you hear at school? Why do your seniors seem so unwilling to understand and accept you, your ideas and your wishes? What are you to think of all the

dishonesty, contradictions, and injustices around you - all of which are presented to you as being inevitable in the social context? Why must life be such an uphill struggle against built-in obstacles, especially for those of you who are already working so hard in your young years? What can you do about peace in your own country and in today's world, so full of violence and hatred?

You have questions too *about the Church*. Is she close enough to you? Can she really inspire you to live by the Gospel, to care more for the weak and the poor, to grow out of every form of selfishness, and to treat every human being as a brother or a sister?

You are asking these questions because you are really concerned. And you believe that *what you hope for can be achieved*. That is why you are the hope of the future for all of us, and why I love you so much.

And sometimes you are misunderstood. Sometimes you run into a wall of incomprehension. Yet do not be discouraged. There is a path to take. Have courage. *The Lord is with you* on your path.

3. And because you want to be with the Lord, *you have come* with all your joys and anxieties, your fears and hopes, *to Jesus Christ*. Saint Peter said: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (*Jo.* 6, 68). Yes, Jesus Christ has words of eternal life for you, for all the young people of Korea, for the young people of the whole world.

This evening Jesus speaks to you in the words of Saint Paul to his young disciple Timothy: "*Fight the good fight of the faith: take hold of the eternal life to which you were called*" (*1 Tim.* 6, 12). Most of you have already accepted Jesus in Baptism, and you have been strengthened for the "Good fight of the faith" in the Sacrament of Confirmation. But what is this "faith"?

It is faith in "Christ Jesus who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession" (*Ibid.* 6, 13). You remember the scene from Saint John's Gospel. Pilate wants to understand the charges brought against Jesus. He wants to know who Jesus is. And Jesus plainly confesses who he is: "For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, *to bear witness to the truth*. Every one who is of the truth hears my voice" (*Jo.* 18, 37).

But what is the truth to which he bore witness? It is that God loves us, that he is Love itself; *that whoever sees Jesus sees the Father* (Cf. *ibid.* 14, 9). The truth is that God, the Father of Jesus, is also our Father: "The blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see" (*1 Tim.* 6, 15-16). This God, whom mankind and each one of us in his or her own way has sought, is made known to us and to the world by Jesus. Jesus confirmed the confession of his truth by giving his life for us on the Cross and by rising from the dead.

4. By accepting this truth, and by accepting *your own share in Christ's paschal Sacrifice*, you do

what Saint Paul encouraged Timothy to do: "Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called . . ." (1 Tim. 6, 12). It is not easy. First of all you will have to struggle against disbelief: your own at times: and the disbelief of those who, like Pontius Pilate are not interested or have given up hope of ever finding the true meaning of their lives. Like Pilate they ask without hope, "What is truth?", and walk away without the answer.

Then you must fight against the temptation to water down the requirements of the Gospel, the temptation to falsify Jesus' message by weakening the personal and collective moral demands that he makes on those who follow him. To fight against this temptation is to "fight the good fight of the faith".

5. It is now up to you to ask yourselves how in practice you too are to "make the good confession" in your turn, here and now, "in the presence of God who gives life to all things, and of Jesus Christ" (*Ibid.* 6, 13), and in the presence of our contemporaries. In other words, where do "God and I and People" come in? *What path am I going to follow?*

In the reading we have listened to from the First Letter to Timothy, there are described *two programmes* of life, two possible attitudes in life. One of these is wrong and is to be rejected; the other one is the right path to a "life which is life indeed" (*Ibid.* 6, 19).

First there is the attitude of the "rich in this world" who are "haughty", who place all their trust in wealth and all that goes with it: privilege, power, influence. Then there is the attitude of those who place their trust in God, those who do good, those who are "rich in good deeds". It is not so much a question of having or not having wealth: *what counts is the attitude of the heart* and the good works that spring from it. Even the young and the materially poor can be "rich" in heart and "haughty" in spirit if they limit the horizons of their hopes and dreams to the selfish pursuit of power and material well-being.

The temptation is great indeed, as you well know, to follow this path. You experience it especially when you feel, "realistically", as you say, that in the end it is futile to struggle to be good and unselfish in a world so full of injustice, so cold and harsh, where there seems to be no room for the "meek" and the "poor of spirit" whom Jesus spoke about in the Beatitudes. But to struggle against this defeatism is to "fight the good fight of the faith".

And seeing your open young faces here this evening, I know that you want to live rightly. *I am convinced that you will choose the path that Jesus teaches* and that you will not give up. And as you struggle to create a better world you will guard against temptations to inconsistency in your own lives - the temptation to combat injustice with injustice, violence with violence or any other kind of evil with evil. Your weapons are of a different kind. They are truth, justice, peace and faith, and they are invincible. The power that you wield in the "good fight of the faith" is "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Cf. Eph. 6, 10-17). Only the word of God points out the path to

victory, and it passes through reconciliation and love.

6. It is important for you to realize that you do not stand alone. *The whole Church stands with you* in choosing to follow this path of our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ. You are the younger generation of the Church in Korea which is now giving thanks to the Blessed Trinity for the two hundred years of its mission in your homeland.

It is now your turn to embrace this heritage in its fullness and to pass it on to those to come. For this reason it is important for you to *feel at home in the Church*, to take your place in the Church, especially by becoming more and more involved in the life of your parish communities and in the works of the apostolate: "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (*Matth. 5, 16*).

Let the world know that you have chosen the path of truth goodness and compassion, honesty and love, pardon and reconciliation where necessary, and openness to all. Yes, the path of generosity, personal discipline and prayer. And when someone asks why you live this way, you will answer: "*Because of my faith in Jesus Christ*".

7. You will need strength, but God will give you his grace. Grace is indeed the power of God that lights the path of your life towards "the life which is life indeed" (*Matth. 5, 19*). Dear young people: it is *in union with Christ through prayer* - with Christ your brother and your Saviour, Christ the Son of the eternal Father - that you will understand the full meaning of life and receive the grace to live it to the full, to be alive in Christ! "Grace be with you!" (*Ibid. 5, 21*).

And in this beautiful month of May, the Month of Youth and the Month of our Blessed Mother Mary, may she who is "full of grace" love you and keep you in her Son our Lord Jesus Christ, for ever and ever!