



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS
POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO THE FAITHFUL OF VANNES**

Tuesday, 15 April 1997

Dear Friends,

Your presence here fills me with joy, for you remind me of a lovely day during my last pilgrimage among the People of God in France. I thank Bishop François-Mathurin Gourvès of Vannes for accompanying you here to introduce to me the devoted faithful who unobtrusively did all they could to ensure that my visit to Brittany was perfectly organized.

In greeting you most cordially, I give thanks to the Lord with you for the faith and apostolic courage of all those who many centuries ago brought the Gospel to your land, and who implanted and strengthened it. Furthermore, as I said on 20 September: “We turn to St Anne, who appeared to Yves Nicolazic” and said to him: “Do not be afraid ... God wants me to be honoured here” (*Homily in Sainte Anne d’Auray*, n. 3; *L’Osservatore Romano* English edition, 2 October 1996, p. 3). Yes, St Anne has watched over Bretons and the faithful of western France so that they can gather in joy, under the light of God, under the sun!

Thanks to your patient work, the parishes and movements of the Diocese were able to display their beautiful vitality. I greet you today as the witnesses of “more and more lay people [who] are involved in guiding the Christian community and in the structures of public and social life” (*ibid.*, n. 4, p. 3).

How can I not recall for a moment the magnificent gathering of families that you organized in the impressive setting of Memorial Park, close to St Anne’s Basilica? My thoughts are directed to those parents, those numerous and joyful children and also those who courageously face their handicaps. I trust Christian families to proclaim the Gospel of life to the people around them.

A group of young people has joined your pilgrimage to Rome. I greet them with pleasure. I hope,

dear friends, to meet you in Paris this coming August. And I know that beforehand you will have gathered many comrades from other countries. May these meetings, these reflections, this great common prayer strengthen you in faith and help you prepare your future! To you too, I repeat what I said in Sainte Anne d'Auray: "The Church is sent to all people ... to proclaim to them the salvation God offers them all. Christians are all responsible for this mission" (ibid., n. 6, p. 3).

Thank you again for all you skilfully arranged for my visit to Brittany. May God bless you and all your loved ones!

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