



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II TO THE PILGRIMS FROM THE DIOCESE OF COLOGNE

Monday, 18 September 2000

*Your Eminence,
Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate,
Dear Priests and Deacons,
Dear Sisters and dear Brothers.*

1. After celebrating the Eucharist with your Cardinal Archbishop at the tomb of the Apostles in St Peter's Basilica, the rock on which God's house is built, you want to meet the Successor of Peter. So welcome to you all! In particular, I greet Cardinal Joachim Meisner, Archbishop of Cologne, who, together with a large group of Bishops has accompanied your pilgrimage to Rome.

2. Today, before Holy Mass, you entered St Peter's Basilica with awareness. You passed through the Holy Door which stays open throughout the Jubilee of the Year 2000. The Holy Door is the image of Christ, who said of himself: "I am the door". Your festive procession should not only be an exterior rite, but also the sign of an interior choice. Therefore Christ is demanding. He invites people to make decisions. It was not by chance that he promised his disciples: "If any one enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture" (*Jn 10: 9*).

Today people find themselves facing numerous open doors. For young people in particular, it is difficult to choose among so many doors the one which gives meaning and truth to their lives. It is not easy to refuse certain external pleasures and to immerse oneself in profound and silent inner joy.

Thus the door of life is undoubtedly demanding. Those who want to pass through it must make themselves small so that Christ can grow. They must leave behind all that is superfluous and marginal to make more room for Christ.

3. I am glad, because by passing through the Holy Door you want to show: we are determined to cross the threshold of the third millennium with Jesus Christ. I also invite you to pray especially for the young people who, in these years that are so important for them, must make decisions for their lives. May the Holy Spirit grant them the inventiveness, strength and courage to choose the way through the narrow door, despite the difficulties (cf. *Mt 7: 13*).

May the experience of this pilgrimage strengthen you personally, so that you can proclaim your love from the horizon that Jesus Christ unfolded to us men and women 2,000 years ago: "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (*Jn 10: 10*).

I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing to you and to your entire diocesan family.

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