



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II TO JUBILEE PILGRIMS FROM MILAN AND VENICE

Saturday, 4 November 2000

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

1. I welcome you with affection on the occasion of your Jubilee pilgrimage to the tombs of the Apostles. I first address you, dear pilgrims from the *Archdiocese of Milan*. I affectionately greet Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, your zealous Pastor, and thank him for his noble words expressing your sentiments as well as for his cordial good wishes to me on my name day. I warmly reciprocate the same good wishes to you, Your Eminence, who are also called Charles, and to all of you who acknowledge St Charles Borromeo as your co-patron.

I greet the Auxiliary Bishops and the Bishops of Ambrosian origin present here, as well as the priests, religious, seminarians and pastoral workers. I extend a respectful greeting to the civil authorities of the region, the province and the municipalities who have wished to join you today to share this significant moment of joy and intense spirituality. My cordial welcome is extended to the parish representatives from the Dioceses of Lugano, Novara and Bergamo, who have followed the Ambrosian rite since ancient times, and to the parish lay ministers here with you today in such large numbers, who make our meeting even more festive.

2. You are celebrating your Jubilee in the Eternal City, which St Charles described as "*more glorious than all others, and which, at the head of a great and strong body, has two excellent eyes, that is, the bodies of the two Apostles*" (*Acta Ecclesiae Mediolanensis*, vol. II, p. 88). You are making your pilgrimage the very day on which the Church commemorates him. I remember my visits to your beautiful cathedral, where I could kneel near that great Bishop's remains, which lie in the crypt.

I return in spirit to his tomb, listening to the valuable instructions he gave for the Jubilee pilgrimage. In one of his pastoral letters for the Holy Year of 1575 he wrote: "*Then having arrived in Rome, going again to Confession and receiving Communion, you will devoutly celebrate the sacred Jubilee, avoiding all curiosity and vanity. The Jubilee is a holy year, a year of the most complete forgiveness, a year of the Lord's grace*" (*Acta Ecclesiae Mediolanensis*, vol. II, p. 885). As it

was then, today too the Jubilee is a fitting and precious opportunity for true conversion.

3. Dear brothers and sisters, rediscover day after day God's merciful love for every human being: with the zeal of renewed fidelity to Christ, show ever greater solidarity to your neighbour, especially those most in need. Live this dawn of the third millennium with steadfast faith, courageous hope and ardent charity. In this important historical transition, you have *so many challenges* to face!

The challenge of consumerism: your region enjoys great prosperity; may the pursuit of non-essential goods never predominate or cause you to forget the needs of the poor, both those who live close to you and those far away.

The challenge of secularization: God now seems totally excluded from so many areas of life. You therefore have an important and urgent duty to evangelize, imbuing the surroundings where you live with Christian values and offering everyone occasions for encountering the word of God and the person of Christ. Many people, however unconsciously, are looking precisely for these profound spiritual experiences.

The challenge of multi-ethnicity: also present in the territory of your Archdiocese are people from different countries who belong to various races, cultures and religions. You are asked not to close the doors of your hearts to those who ask you for hospitality, in the conviction that acceptance and the witness of love are a privileged way to "speak" about Jesus to those who do not yet know him.

4. Your Archbishop has just listed the priorities you have identified for the coming pastoral year, which call for the generous contribution of all the members of the archdiocesan community: young people, vocations, the clergy and pastoral workers. I urge you to support the initiatives planned, offering your generous collaboration according to each person's abilities. In this way you all will be able to advance together on the path of the new evangelization, and God will make all your efforts bear abundant good fruit.

Church of Milan, do not be afraid of the great challenges of the present moment! Advance confidently on the path of the new evangelization, in loving service to the poor and with Christian witness in every social situation. Remember the long, fruitful history of your parishes, your oratories and your many associations. Always live the Gospel in the big and little decisions you make each day, and may every Christian community renew its own fruitful apostolic witness in fidelity to its spiritual traditions.

May Mary Most Holy accompany and support you: I ask her to watch over your families as a caring Mother, especially over the sick and the weakest. May you be protected by the holy patrons of the Archdiocese, Ambrose and Charles.

5. With great affection I now address and greet you, dear *pilgrims from the Patriarchate of Venice*. I greet you, venerable Brother, Cardinal Marco Cé, and I am grateful for your courteous words on everyone's behalf. Your pilgrimage has led you to retrace the footsteps of the Apostles Peter and Paul. Today you are offered an occasion to renew your fidelity to the Successor of Peter. Thank you for your visit and for the assurance of your prayers.

During these days of special Jubilee experience, be illumined by Christ's light and joy. He alone can fill your hearts with

hope. He alone can awaken in each one of you *renewed apostolic zeal*, capable of infecting the hearts and minds of everyone you meet in daily life. Following the example of your patron, St Mark, be apostles of the Gospel: spread the Good News everywhere by constantly bearing witness to brotherly love and caring for your neediest neighbours. Openness to the needs of others is an eloquent sign of that Gospel charity which also touches the hearts of non-believers. Draw from the inexhaustible source of divine charity the necessary energy to work constantly on promoting the dignity of every person. May Christ's love encourage and support you in your effort to build with all people of good will *a society respectful of every human being*.

6. May the Jubilee encourage a vast and deep spiritual renewal. An authentic community renewal must be combined with personal conversion. In fact, for fruitful apostolic action the contribution of all is needed, in harmony with the Patriarchate's pastoral programme. Unity together with variety represent the great wealth from which the Church draws her own constant and dynamic development. Do not let difficulties hold you back, and do not lose heart if, in carrying out this demanding spiritual programme, you encounter obstacles and, at times, misunderstanding. Go forward confidently. The Lord is with you: he walks with you and constantly renews you with the power of his Spirit. Think only of following him and, with his help, reach out to all with the living message of his saving word even to those who are "far away". Continue this apostolic effort using every useful means.

Walk joyfully, dear brothers and sisters. You have a rich and noble Christian tradition behind you. Many saints and blessed have made your region a land of holiness. Follow their example, forge ahead on the path of holiness. Be the apostles of our time, always trusting in God's support.

May Mary Most Holy, whom we remember on this First Saturday of the month of November, be the model for your faith and the star that guides your steps. With these sentiments, I assure you and your communities of a special remembrance in my prayer.

7. Lastly, I extend a greeting to *all the other pilgrims* who have wished to join us at this meeting. I hope that crossing the threshold of the Holy Door will prompt one and all to cling more generously to Christ, the only Redeemer of man. I gladly assure you of my prayers, dear brothers and sisters, as I cordially bless you, your families and all your loved ones.

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