



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC PILGRIMAGE
OF HIS HOLINESS OF PAUL VI
TO WEST ASIA, OCEANIA AND AUSTRALIA

MASS AT THE «QUEZON CIRCLE»

HOMILY OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI

Philippines, Manila

Sunday, 29 November 1970

I Paul, the successor of Saint Peter, charged with the pastoral mission for the whole Church, would never have come from Rome to this far-distant land, unless I had been most firmly convinced of two fundamental things: first, of Christ; and second, of your salvation.

Convinced of Christ: yes, I feel the need to proclaim him, I cannot keep silent. «Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!» (1 Cor. 9:16). I am sent by him, by Christ himself, to do this. I am an apostle, I am a witness. The more distant the goal, the more difficult my mission the more pressing is the love that urges me to it (Cfr. 2 Cor. 5:14). I must bear witness to his name: Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matth. 16: 16). He reveals the invisible God, he is the firstborn of all creation, the foundation of everything created. He is the Teacher of mankind, and its Redeemer. He was born, he died and he rose again for us. He is the centre of history and of the world; he is the one who knows us and who loves us; he is the companion and the friend of our life. He is the man of sorrows and of hope. It is he who will come and who one day will be our judge and - we hope -the everlasting fulness of our existence, our happiness. I could never finish speaking about him: he is the light and the truth; indeed, he is «the way, the truth and the life» (Jo. 14:6). He is the bread and the spring of living water to satisfy our hunger and our thirst. He is our shepherd, our guide, our model, our comfort, our brother. Like us, and more than us, he has been little, poor, humiliated; he has been a worker; he has known misfortune and been patient. For our sake he spoke, worked miracles and founded a new kingdom where the poor are happy, where

peace is the principle for living together, where the pure of heart and those who mourn are raised up and comforted, where those who hunger and thirst after justice have their fill, where sinners can be forgiven, where all are brothers.

Jesus Christ: you have heard him spoken of; indeed the greater part of you are already his: you are Christians. So, to you Christians I repeat his name, to everyone I proclaim him: Jesus Christ is the beginning and the end, the Alpha and the Omega; he is the king of the new world; he is the secret of history; he is the key to our destiny. He is the mediator, the bridge, between heaven and earth. He is more perfectly than anyone else the Son of Man, because he is the Son of God, eternal and infinite. He is the son of Mary, blessed among all women, his mother according to the flesh, and our mother through the sharing in the Spirit of his Mystical Body.

Jesus Christ is our constant preaching; it is his name that we proclaim to the ends of the earth (Cfr. *Rom.* 10:18) and throughout all ages (*Rom.* 9:5). Remember this and ponder on it: the Pope has come here among you and has proclaimed Jesus Christ!

In doing this I express also the second dynamic idea that brings me to you: that Jesus Christ is to be praised not only for what he is in himself; he is to be exalted and loved for what he is for us, for each one of us, for every people and for every culture. Christ is our Saviour. Christ is our greatest benefactor. Christ is our liberator. We need Christ, in order to be genuine and worthy men in the temporal order, and men saved and raised to the supernatural order.

At this point several questions present themselves. They are questions that torment our times, and I am sure that they are in your minds too. These questions are: Can Christ really be of any use to us for solving the practical and concrete problems of the present life? Did he not say that his kingdom is not of this world? What can he do for us? In other words, can Christianity give rise to a true humanism? Can the Christian view of life inspire a real renewal of society? Can that view harmonize with the demands of modern life, and favour progress and well-being of all? Can Christianity interpret peoples's yearnings and identify with the tendencies special to your culture?

These questions are many, and we cannot answer them with one single formula which would take account of the complexity of the problems and the different needs of man, spiritual, moral, economic, political, ethnic, historical and social. Yet, as far as the positive and happy development of your social conditions is concerned, we can give a positive answer: Christianity can be salvation also on the earthly and human level. Christ multiplied the loaves also to satisfy the physical hunger of the crowds following him. And Christ continues to work this miracle for those who truly believe in him, and who take from him the principles of a dynamic social order, that is, of an order that is continually progressing and being renewed.

For example, Christ, as you know, constantly proclaims his great and supreme commandment of love. There exists no social ferment stronger and better than this. In its positive aspect it

unleashes incomparable and unquenchable moral forces; in its negative aspect it denounces all forms of selfishness, inertia and forgetfulness which do harm to the needs of others. Christ proclaims the equality and brotherhood of all men: who but he has taught and can still effectively teach such principles which revolution, while benefitting from them, rejects? Who but he, we say, has revealed the fatherhood of God, the true and unassailable reason for the brotherhood of men? And whence comes the genuine and sacred freedom of man if not from human dignity, of which Christ made himself the teacher and champion? And who, if not he, has made available temporal goods, when he took from them the nature of ends in themselves and declared that they are means, means which must to some extent suffice for all, and means which are of less value than the supreme goods of the spirit? Who but Christ has planted in the hearts of his followers the talent for love and service on behalf of all man's sufferings and needs? Who has proclaimed the law of work as a right, a duty and a means of providence? Who has proclaimed the dignity that raises it to the level of cooperation with and fulfillment of the divine plan? Who has freed it from every form of inhuman slavery, and given it its reward of justice and merit?

To you who are students and can well grasp these fundamental ideas and these higher values, I would say this: Today while you are challenging the structures of affluent society, the society that is dominated by technology and by the anxious pursuit of productivity and consumption, you are aware of the insufficiency and the deceptiveness of the economic and social materialism that marks our present progress. You are truly able to reaffirm the superiority, richness and relevance of authentic Christian sociology, based on true knowledge of man and of his destiny.

Workers, my message to you is this: While today you have become aware of your strength, take care that in the pursuit of your total rehabilitation you do not adopt formulas that are incomplete and inaccurate. These, while offering you partial victories of an economic and hedonistic nature, under the banner of a selfish and bitter struggle, may later increase the disappointment of having been deprived of the higher values of the spirit, of having been deprived of your religious personality and of your hope in the life that will not end. Let your aspirations be inspired by the vigour and wisdom that only the Gospel of the divine Worker can give you.

To you, the poor, I have this to say: remember that you have a supreme friend-Christ who called you blessed, the privileged inheritors of his kingdom. He personified himself in you, so as to turn to you every good person, every generous heart, every man who wishes to save himself by seeking in you Christ the Saviour. Yes, strive to raise yourselves: you have a right and duty to do so. Demand the help of a society that wishes to be called civilized but do not curse either your lot or those who lack sensitivity, for you know that you are rich in the values of Christian patience and redemptive suffering.

A final word, to you who are rich: remember how severe Christ was in your regard, when he saw you self-satisfied, inactive and selfish. And on the other hand remember how responsive and grateful he was when he found you thoughtful and generous; he said that not even a cup of cold

water given in a Christian spirit would go unrewarded. Perhaps it is your hour: the time for you to open your eyes and hearts to a great new vision not dedicated to the struggles of self-interest, hatred and violence, but dedicated to solicitous and generous love and to true progress.

All this, dear sons and daughters, dear brothers and sisters, is part of the message of the Catholic faith. I have the happy duty to proclaim it here, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.