



The Holy See

PASTORAL JOURNEY TO KOREA, PAPUA NEW GUINEA,

SOLOMON ISLANDS AND THAILAND

**MESSAGE OF JOHN PAUL II
FOR CHILDREN'S DAY IN SOUTH KOREA**

Municipal Stadium Mudung in Kwangju (Korea)

Friday, 4 May 1984

Dear Children of Korea,

It is a joy for me to greet you today and to offer you a special message for Children's Day.

What I want to speak to you about is *love*, the love for which you were made, the love that each one of you longs for.

1. One of the disciples of Jesus, called John the Evangelist, wrote a letter to the early Christians explaining that "love is of God" and that "God is love" (1 Jo. 4, 7-8). The God who is love, and who has loved us so much, has in fact given us a share in his life, just as a father shares his life with his children. And God wants us *to love him in return* for the love and the life that he has given us. God is our Father and he asks us to love him as his children.

But God also wants us to love others. This is the meaning of our lives: to love God and to love others - to love our parents, our brothers and sisters, our relatives and friends, all our fellow human beings, even those who may have hurt us or offended us. To love our neighbour means living for others, lending a helping hand, giving service where needed, being just, honest and pure, gentle, truthful and kind. To love our neighbour means helping to build a better world.

We do this not so much by words as by what we do, because action speak louder than words. That is what Saint John meant when he wrote: "Little children, let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth" (1 Jo. 3, 18).

2. Dear children of Korea: all the world's children, *all the people in the world deserve your love*, regardless of their nationality, sex, religion or race; whether they are strong or weak, rich or poor, healthy or sick. To love is to think about other people, to accept others, to go out of your way to help them, to serve them, to encourage them. To share with others the world and its good things, the way that God has shared them with you. In loving others, you will discover the meaning of life; indeed you will discover the Giver of life. the Creator of the world, the God and Father of us all.

3. And if you are Christian, dear children, you have a special *reason to love: in order to be like Jesus*, who is God's eternal Son, the Son who became man in order to give his life for us on the Cross, out of love, to help us to understand the meaning of love, to make us too able to love.

4. And today, I, John Paul II, as the Representative of Jesus, as Bishop of Rome, *offer my love to every boy and girl in Korea*, to each and every one without any distinction. I proclaim your human dignity as children of God created to share in God's love forever. I proclaim your rights, no matter how little or helpless you may be and I proclaim the duties that go with your rights, which you are called to perform out of love, in order to safeguard the rights of others. I especially love *every child who suffers*, who is lonely, who is abandoned, especially those with no one to love them and care for them. Dear children, I give you all the love of my heart.

I also want to encourage all those working to build a world of peace for you to live in, those who take care of your health, who teach you, who speak to you about God. I am spiritually close to your *parents*, who have transmitted to you God's gift of life and are the first ones to teach you the meaning of love. Today I join my love to theirs, and together we join our love to the love of God, who has loved us and asks us to love in return.

Dear children of Korea, your future and the destiny of this land depend, under God, on *your willingness to love*. This is my message for today and for the years to come, my message of love: "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God" (1 Jo. 4, 7).