



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER
POPE JOHN PAUL II
FOR THE IX AND X WORLD YOUTH DAY**

"As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (Jn 20:21).

Dear Young People,

1. "Peace be with you!" (Jn 20:19). This is the greeting, rich in meaning, which the risen Lord extended to the disciples, so fearful and dismayed after his passion.

With the same intense and deep feeling I now address you, as we prepare to celebrate the Ninth and Tenth World Youth Days. They will take place, as is now the pleasant custom, on Palm Sunday of 1994 and 1995, while the great international meeting, which gathers young people from all over the world around the Pope, is set for January 1995 in Manila, capital of the Philippines.

In the previous meetings that have marked our journey of reflection and prayer, like the disciples, we have had the opportunity of "seeing" — which also means believing and knowing, almost "touching" (cf. 1 Jn 1:1) — the risen Lord.

We "saw" him and welcomed him as teacher and friend in Rome in 1984 and 1985, when we began our pilgrimage from the centre and heart of Catholicism in order to give a reason for the hope that is in us (cf 1 Pt 3:15), carrying his cross along the highways of the world. We asked him — insistently — to be with us in our daily journey.

We "saw" him in Buenos Aires in 1987 when, together with the young people of every continent, especially from Latin America, "we came to know and believe in the love God has for us" (1 Jn 4:16) and we proclaimed that his revelation, like the sun that sheds light and warmth, nourishes the hope and renews the joy of the missionary commitment to build the civilization of love.

We "saw" him in Santiago de Compostela in 1988, where we discovered his face and recognized him as *the way and the truth and the life* (Jn 14:6), while together with the Apostle James we meditated on the ancient Christian roots of Europe.

We "saw" him in 1991 in Czestochowa, when — with barriers fallen — all together, young people from East and West, under the kindly gaze of our heavenly Mother, we proclaimed the fatherhood of God through the Spirit and we acknowledged that we are - in him - brothers and sisters: "You received a spirit of adoption" (Rom 8:15).

Man is driven to seek the face of God

Recently we "saw" him again in Denver, in the heart of the United States of America, where we sought him in the face of contemporary man in a substantially different context from the previous pauses, but no less exalting for the depth of its significance, experiencing and tasting the gift of life in abundance: "I came that they might have life and have it more abundantly" (Jn 10:10).

As we keep before our eyes and in our hearts the wonderful and unforgettable spectacle of that great meeting in the Rocky Mountains, our pilgrimage continues and this time pauses in Manila, in the vast continent of Asia, the crossroads of the Tenth World Youth Day.

The desire to "see the Lord" has always occupied the heart of man (cf. Jn 12:21) and it drives him unceasingly to seek his face. We too, as we start out, express this longing and, with the pilgrim of Zion, we repeat: "Your presence, O Lord, I seek" (Ps 27:8).

The Son of God comes to meet us, he welcomes us and shows himself to us, he repeats to us what he said to the disciples on the evening of Easter: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (Jn 20:21).

Once again, young people from all over the world are summoned by Jesus Christ, the centre of our lives, the basis of our faith, the reason for our hope and the source of our charity.

Called by him, young people from every corner of the globe ask themselves about their commitment to the "new evangelization", continuing the mission entrusted to the Apostles and in which every Christian, through his Baptism and membership in the community of the Church, is called to participate.

2. The vocation and missionary commitment of the Church spring from the central mystery of our faith: Easter. It is in fact "on the evening of that first day" that Jesus appeared to the disciples, barricaded behind locked doors "for fear of the Jews" (Jn 20:19).

We hope to triumph in the fullness of time

Having given proof of his boundless love by embracing the cross and offering himself in sacrifice for the redemption of all people — he had in fact said: "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends" (Jn 15:13) — the divine Master returns among his own, among those whom he had loved most intensely and with whom he had spent his earthly life.

It is an extraordinary encounter, during which their hearts are filled with happiness for the refound presence of Christ, after the events of his tragic passion and his glorious resurrection. The disciples "rejoiced when they saw the Lord" (Jn 20:20).

Meeting him on the day after his resurrection meant for the Apostles that they could see with their own eyes that his message was not false, that his promises were not written in the sand. He, alive and blazing with glory, is the proof of the almighty love of God, which radically changes the course of history and of our individual lives.

The meeting with Jesus is therefore the event which gives meaning to human life and profoundly alters it, by opening the spirit to horizons of authentic freedom.

Our time too occurs "on the day after the resurrection". It is "the acceptable time", "the day of salvation" (2 Cor 6:2).

The risen Christ returns among us with the fullness of joy and with overflowing richness of life. Hope becomes certainty, because if he has conquered death, we too can hope to triumph one day in the fullness of time, in the period of the final contemplation of God.

3. However the meeting with the risen Lord does not reflect only a moment of personal joy. It is rather the occasion when the call that awaits every human being is shown in all its breadth. Strong in our faith in the risen Christ, we are all invited to open the doors of life, without fear or doubt, to welcome the Word which is the Way, the Truth and the Life (cf. Jn 14:6), and to shout it courageously to the whole world.

The salvation offered to us is a gift that should not be jealously hidden. It is like the light of the sun, which by its nature breaks through the darkness; it is like the water of a clear spring, which gushes from the heart of the rock.

"God so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (Jn 3:16). Jesus, sent by the Father to mankind, communicates the abundance of life to every believer (cf. Jn 10:10), as we reflected and proclaimed on the occasion of the recent Day in Denver.

His Gospel must become "communication" and mission. The missionary vocation summons every Christian; it becomes the very essence of every testimony of concrete and living faith. It is a mission which traces its origins from the Father's plan, the plan of love and salvation which is

carried out through the power of the Spirit, without which every apostolic initiative is destined to failure. It is to enable his disciples to carry out this mission that Jesus says to them: "Receive the Holy Spirit" (Jn 20:22). He thus transmits to the Church his own saving mission, so that the Easter mystery may continue to be communicated to every person, in every age, in every corner of the globe.

You, young people, are especially called to become missionaries of this New Evangelization, by daily witnessing to the Word that saves.

4. You personally experience the anxieties of the present historical period, fraught with hope and doubt, in which it can at times be easy to lose the way that leads to the encounter with Christ.

In fact, numerous are the temptations of our time, the seductions that seek to muffle the divine voice resounding within the heart of each individual.

We are sent to proclaim hope and reconciliation

To the people of our century, to all of you, dear young people, who hunger and thirst for truth, the Church offers herself as a travelling companion. She offers the eternal Gospel message and entrusts you with an exalting apostolic task: to be the protagonists of the New Evangelization.

As the faithful guardian and representative of the wealth of faith transmitted to her by Christ, she is ready to enter into dialogue with the new generations; in order to answer their needs and expectations and to find in frank and open dialogue the most appropriate way to reach the source of divine salvation.

The Church entrusts to young people the task of proclaiming to the world the joy which springs from having met Christ. Dear friends, allow yourselves to be drawn to Christ; accept his invitation and follow him. Go and preach the Good News that redeems (cf. Mt 28:19); do it with happiness in your hearts and become *communicators of hope* in a world which is often tempted to despair, *communicators of faith* in a society which at times seems resigned to disbelief, *communicators of love* in daily events that are often marked by a mentality of the most unbridled selfishness.

5. To be able to imitate the disciples, who, overwhelmed by the breath of the Spirit, confidently preached their own faith in the Redeemer who loves everyone and who wants to save everyone (cf. Acts 2:22-24; 32-36), it is necessary to become new people, eradicating the old man within us and allowing ourselves to be totally renewed by the strength of the Lord's Spirit.

Each one of you is sent into the world, especially among your contemporaries, to communicate through the example of your life and work the Gospel message of reconciliation and peace: "We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God" (2 Cor 5:20).

This reconciliation is in the first place the individual destiny of every Christian who receives and continuously renews his personal identity as a disciple of the Son of God in prayer and through receiving the sacraments, especially Penance and the Eucharist.

But it is also the destiny of the whole human family. To be a missionary today in the heart of our society also means making the best use of the media for that religious and pastoral task.

Having become enthusiastic communicators of the saving Word and witnesses to the joy of Easter, you will be builders of peace in a world that searches for this peace as if for a utopia, often forgetting its origin. Peace — as you well know — resides in the heart of every man, if only he knows how to open himself to the greeting of the risen Redeemer: "Peace be with you" (Jn 20:19).

In view of the imminent arrival of the third Christian millennium, to you young people the task of becoming communicators of hope and peacemakers is entrusted in a special way (cf. Mt 5:9) in a world that is ever more in need of credible witnesses and consistent messengers. Know how to speak to the hearts of your contemporaries, who thirst for truth and happiness, in a constant, even if often unconscious, search for God.

6. Dear young people of the whole world!

As the journey towards the Ninth and Tenth World Youth Days officially begins with this Message, I wish again to express my affectionate greeting to each one of you, especially to all who live in the Philippines: in 1995 the world meeting of young people with the Pope will be celebrated for the first time on the Asian continent, so rich in tradition and culture. Young people of the Philippines, it is your turn to prepare a welcome for your many friends from all over the world. So, the young Church of Asia is called in a special way to give a lively and vibrant testimony of faith at the appointment in Manila. My wish is that she will know how to receive this gift that Christ himself is about to offer her.

To you all, young people from every part of the world, I extend my invitation to journey in spirit towards the next Youth Days. Accompanied and guided by your Pastors, in your parishes and Dioceses, in the ecclesial associations, movements and groups, be ready to receive the seeds of holiness and grace which the Lord will surely bestow with generous abundance.

I hope that the celebration of these days may be for you all a privileged occasion of formation and growth in the personal and community knowledge of Christ; may it be an interior stimulus to consecrate yourselves to the Church in the service of your brothers and sisters to build the civilization of love.

To Mary, the Virgin present in the Upper Room, the Mother of the Church (cf. Acts 1:14), I entrust the preparation and success of the next World Youth Days: may she share with us the secret of

how to receive her Son into our lives so we may fulfil his will (cf. Jn 2:5).

May my heartfelt and paternal Blessing accompany you.

From the Vatican, 21 November 1993, Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Universal King.

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