



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

TO ITALIAN CATHOLIC ACTION YOUTH *Saturday, 23 December 1978 Beloved Young People,* It gives me great joy and deep spiritual consolation to receive this morning you who are regional representatives of Catholic Action Youth. Together with your hardworking leaders you have come here to present your Christmas wishes to the Pope. I greet you heartily and, in the first place, I address my greeting to dear Monsignor Cè, who is leaving the office of General Assistant of Catholic Action for the new pastoral ministry entrusted to him, and to the President of Catholic Action, Professor Mario Agnes. I wish I had more time at my disposal to give complete expression to the many, many things that I feel I should say to you. But, as it is not possible now, I postpone the talk, a lengthier one, more in keeping with the affection I cherish for you young people, to another more opportune occasion. For the present, I will merely thank you for this fine visit and reciprocate your good wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. For 1979 I know you have chosen the slogan: "Hi, we're here too". This motto, even if expressed in a friendly, joking form, sums up well the reason for your activity, which wishes to be first and foremost a Christian presence and evangelical testimony in the midst of the environment in which you live. Remember, however, that if you want this presence to be effective and fruitful, you must undertake to get to know Christ better and better and to draw from him, who is a great friend of children, the strength to be really, not just in desire, the salt of the earth and the light of the modern world (cf. Mt 5:13-14). Returning to your beautiful Italian regions, which you represent here, tell your Catholic Action friends that the Pope loves you particularly and follows you in the joyful choice that you have made of Christ, whom you venerate in these days in the form of a little Child. Tell them that the Pope is with all young people: with his continual reminder, with his fatherly benevolence, with his incessant prayer and with the Apostolic Blessing which I now willingly impart to you, to all the young people you represent here and to the dear members of your families, as a token of elect graces from the Child Jesus.

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