



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE LENTEN SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

10 March 1979

Dear Brothers!

At this moment we want, above all, to express together our gratitude to Christ the Lord who, during the past days, has gathered us in this place, in St Matilda's Chapel in the Vatican, where the Pope and his closest collaborators have taken part in the spiritual Exercises of Lent. These Exercises are a special time of God's grace for us. They are the Lenten gift that our Lord and Master has prepared for us. They are so indispensable for us; our souls were looking forward to them intensely. Among the many tasks, among the important duties to which we attend, each of us appreciates particularly the days that permit us to consider exclusively the most essential problems and to apply, in a certain way, to all the other matters that compose our everyday life, *the deepest measure, which is Christ himself.*

The Father Preacher of the Exercises has tried in the first place to make everyone see Christ. We are heartily grateful to him for this, and now I express this gratitude on behalf of all the participants. The Father Moderator raised, together with us, the fundamental questions; we could say, the eternal questions: he raised them in the old way, which is, however, always fresh and new. These questions, in fact, never lose their topicality; they never fall into decay, and we always listen to them as new and original problems. *Cur Deus homo? Cur Deus panis? Quomodo Christum predicare?* The Father Preacher of these Exercises outlined the great themes of our faith, our life, our ministry, illustrating them with his own pastoral experiences and referring to the characteristic aspects of our times. He left space for the reflection of each one. He was sincere with his particular audience. He followed the great movement of the thought and life of the modern Church, while always remaining in this concrete place, which was our "upper room" of Spiritual Exercises, with the men gathered in it, that is, us.

Every human work is according to the measure of the man. In the work of Spiritual Exercises the most important thing is always the following: that the man should be a faithful messenger. Just as our Father Moderator said on the first evening, referring to the Angelus: the name of this messenger is not important, what counts is the message itself.

The most important thing is that this message should reach the heart, that it should sink into the soil of the soul and act for a long time in this soil into which it has been thrown in the same way as grain is thrown.

Our desires meet on this, and it is just with these wishes that I want to thank the Reverend Father. These wishes are at the same time for us, for the participants. May Christ the Lord grant them through the intercession of his Mother, to whom the Reverend Father often directed our attention, referring to the figure of the Blessed Maximilian Kolbe. May this final Blessing become for us all a token of the fulfilment of these wishes, which we formulate for one another at the end of the Spiritual Exercises.

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