



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE STUDENTS FROM
THE ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE OF BOSSEY**

Friday, 10 February 1989

Dear Friends from the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey,

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (2Cor. 1, 2).

I am very happy to welcome you here today as you begin your pilgrimage to Rome. I hope that this visit will be an occasion for each of you to grow in your understanding of the Catholic Church. Through the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity the Holy See is pleased to offer you its hospitality as a sign of appreciation and esteem for the work of the Institute.

During the past five months your professors have helped you to reflect more deeply on “Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation”, a theme which is of great concern to the Catholic Church. As I had occasion to state last year: “The Church has always considered it part of her pastoral mission to defend and support the basic rights of the human person and in a prophetic way to denounce poverty and oppression through charitable activity and by joining projects to eliminate them” (Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Allocutio Salisburgi habita, ad Christianos fratres seiunetos*, 7, die 26 iun. 1988: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, XI, 2 [1988] 2209). As followers of Jesus, who was deeply moved by the needs of the people around him (Cfr. *Matth.* 9, 36), we too are called to concern ourselves with the needs of those who are bearing the intolerable burden of poverty. Their sufferings often lead to a hopelessness which destroys the very will to work for effective remedies (Cfr. Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 13).

As we seek to understand the true meaning as well as the challenge of justice and peace, we must not lose sight of the fact that man is made in the image and likeness of God (Cfr. *Gen.* 1, 26 s.). Nor must we forget that “when man disobeys God and refuses to submit to his rule, nature rebels against him and no longer recognizes him as its ‘master’ for he has tarnished the divine

image in himself" (Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 30). Thus even our concern today to protect the environment must have as its point of reference the human person: "God is glorified when creation serves the integral development of the whole human family" (Eiusdem *Allocutio Nairobiae habita, ad Organismos ab omnibus nationibus ibi extantes*, 2, die 18 aug. 1985: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, VIII, 2 [1985] 479). Concern for the wholeness and integrity of creation, and a growing awareness of the need to protect the environment and to conserve non-renewable resources are part of the moral demands of true Christian stewardship.

The present world situation makes it imperative for Churches and Ecclesial Communities to work together to promote justice, peace and responsible stewardship of the environment. In this way we bear witness to the "good news" of Creation and Redemption, and thus lead others to Christ, "so that the world may believe" (*Io.* 17, 21).

As you will shortly be returning to your own countries and to your local Churches and Communities, it is my hope and prayer that the Lord will keep alive within you the spirit of your studies at Bossey. May the same Lord Jesus Christ bless you and your families and give you every help and encouragement in your future work.

© Copyright 1989 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

Copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana