



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO IRELAND

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II TO THE SICK

Knock

Sunday, 30 September 1979

Dear brothers and sisters,

The Gospels are filled with instances where our Lord shows his particular love and concern for the sick and for all those in pain. Jesus loved those who suffered, and this attitude has been passed on to his Church. To love the sick is something that the Church has learned from Christ.

Today I am happy to be with the sick and the handicapped. I have come to give witness to Christ's love for you, and to tell you that the Church and the Pope love you too. They reverence and esteem you. They are convinced that there is something very special about your mission in the Church.

By his suffering and death Jesus took on himself all human suffering, and he gave it a new value. As a matter of fact, he calls upon the sick, upon everyone who suffers, to collaborate with him in the salvation of the world.

Because of this, pain and sorrow are not endured alone or in vain. Although it remains difficult to understand suffering, Jesus has made it clear that its value is linked to his own suffering and death, to his own sacrifice. In other words, by your suffering you help Jesus in his work of salvation. This great truth is difficult to express accurately, but Saint Paul puts it this way: "... in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the Church" (*Col 1:24*).

Your call to suffering requires strong faith and patience. Yes, it means that you are called to love with a special intensity. But remember that our Blessed Mother Mary is close to you, just as she was close to Jesus at the foot of the Cross. And she will never leave you all alone.

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