



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY
OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO PARIS, ON THE OCCASION OF THE
12th WORLD YOUTH DAY
(AUGUST 21-24, 1997)

**MESSAGE OF POPE JOHN PAUL II
FOR YOUNG PRISONERS**

*To Bishop Claude Frikart
Auxiliary Bishop of Paris
for the young prisoners*

Dear Young People,

During World Youth Day, I am thinking of you who are in prison at the present time. Your situation must not lead you to despair. You carry deep in your hearts the suffering linked to the reasons for your current detention. The Church is close to you. She wants to witness to the hope Christ brings us. No act can deprive you of the dignity that is yours as a child of God.

Let Christ dwell in your hearts! Entrust your ordeal to him! He will help you bear it. In secret and in silence, you can be united with the other young people who are meeting in Paris. Indeed, with your prayers, your sacrifices, your personal renewal, you share in the success of this great gathering and in your brothers' and sisters' conversion. Was it not by prayer alone that St Theresa of the Child Jesus made a prisoner's conversion possible, and without leaving her convent, did she not help the missionaries who struggled to proclaim the Gospel?

Dear young people, have trust! Be reconciled by Christ! May you obtain interior peace, the grace to repent, to be forgiven by God and, as you desire, to lead a better life from now on! With the help of your families, your friends and the Church, I hope you will return to your place in society, where you will be concerned to work at the service of your brothers and sisters, with respect for their persons and their possessions.

As I commend you to the Virgin Mary's motherly intercession, with the Bishops and priests who surround you today, I wholeheartedly bless you as well as all the members of your families.

Paris, 22 August 1997.

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