



The Holy See

***SPEECH OF THE HOLY FATHER
JOHN PAUL II
TO PILGRIM GROUPS***

Saturday, 8 July 2000

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

1. The desire for a richer experience of the Holy Year, which you are already celebrating in your respective places of origin, has led you to Rome to make your Jubilee pilgrimage and to reaffirm your communion with the Successor of Peter. Welcome! It is a joy to receive you all and I greet each of you with sentiments of affection.

I extend a particular greeting to the Clerics Regular of St Paul (Barnabites) and to the priests of the Basilian Order who are here for their respective General Chapters. I also greet the faithful from St Matthew's Parish in Agerola (Naples), the Capuchin friars from the Cagliari friary and the Augustinian religious who are delegates of their order's Justice and Peace Commission. Lastly, I greet everyone taking part in today's meeting.

You know, dear friends, that the Church is observing a holy time, a suitable occasion for renewing herself in the light of Christ, the Word of God made man 2,000 years ago. In this providential period, believers are invited to draw more abundantly from the treasures of mercy that the Lord gives his Bride. During the Jubilee, a time of grace and mercy, everyone is called to respond to God's voice through a serious examination of conscience, the effort of purification and penance, and more intense prayer.

The Holy Year, in fact, brings us even closer to what has always been the fresh spring at which the Church trustingly quenches her thirst: the Word of God, interpreted in words and deeds by the liturgy, the Councils, the Fathers and the saints. From this foundation she learns that the principal source of unity for believers in Christ is the Most Holy Trinity (cf. *Lumen gentium*, nn. 1-8). May the Year 2000 continue to be a hymn of glory to the Father, to the Son and to the Holy Spirit!

2. The Church approaches the Triune God only through Christ, the one Way and the true Holy Door leading her into the

mystery of divine life. Each one is invited to cross this threshold because "this is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it" (*Ps* 118: 20).

Christ has taken our weakness and frailty upon himself to raise us to the dignity of being children of his heavenly Father.

Through his blood poured out on the cross, he reopened heaven to us, after it had been closed by sin and deceit. God chose this eloquent sign to confirm for us his full involvement in human history. In this month of July, the liturgy reminds us in particular that Christ "did ransom men for God from every tribe and tongue and people and nation" (*Rv* 5: 9). All who wash their robes, making them white in the blood of the Lamb (cf. *Rv* 7: 14), will receive life in abundance.

Dear consecrated men and women, in the footsteps of Christ, the obedient Servant, always be ready joyfully to accept God's plan for you and to bear witness that Love can fill human hearts. Your consecration expresses the inner nature of the Christian vocation and the striving of the whole Church-Bride for union with her only Bridegroom.

Dear lay faithful, may your dignity as children of God be reflected in all your actions and concrete duties. May your constant practice of faith, hope and love shine brightly in your responsibilities, your work, your dedication to your families, the education of your children, your social and political service, and in the sphere of culture and information.

3. I cordially welcome the pilgrims who have come from Santiago de Compostela, accompanied by Archbishop Julián Barrio Barrio, whom I greet with fraternal affection.

Having recently celebrated the Holy Year of Compostela, you are well aware of the wealth that God bestows in jubilee celebrations. I hope that you will receive it with joy as you cross the threshold of the Holy Door in this Great Jubilee, so that your hearts and your communities will open themselves to the new life that is Christ, and with him, who is the source of life and hope, the Church of Santiago may strengthen her faith, her fidelity and her apostolic vigour as she faces the challenges of the third millennium.

Take God's grace and mercy with you to your communities and your families. Give them the Pope's affectionate greeting and the Blessing that I now cordially impart to you.

Dear brothers and sisters, I hope that today's pilgrimage will leave in your hearts effective signs of justice and love in the Lord.

On this journey you will have the opportunity to receive the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, to be nourished at the table of the Eucharist and to visit the memorials of the Apostles. May these be intense moments of communion with God. In returning home, may you be spurred to love and to do good works, to participate in the life of the community and to urge one another to hope (cf. *Heb* 10: 23-24), each one in the state of life to which he belongs.

With these sentiments, I invoke upon you the motherly protection of Mary, Mother of the Lord, and cordially bless you all.

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