



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO A GROUP OF WORKERS FROM GENOA

2 April 1979 My dear brothers and sisters, I cannot hide my great joy and deep consolation in bidding a hearty welcome to you working men and women of the first Vicariate Forane of Genoa-San Pier d'Arena. While I was preparing for you these thoughts that I now have pleasure in confiding in you, I was already near you in heart and I looked forward eagerly to meeting you. Let my warm greeting, therefore, go to you all, and in particular to your venerated and indefatigable Archbishop, Cardinal Giuseppe Siri, who has accompanied you here, together with Monsignor Berto Ferrari, Episcopal Vicar for the sphere of work. I am grateful to you for this visit and for your devoted homage. This I greatly appreciate because it is the reflection of a Christian testimony coming from the Ligurian land, rich not only in exceptional natural beauties, but also, and above all, in ancient and sturdy religious traditions, as well as recognized human virtues. Welcoming you with a fatherly heart, which opens to everyone and shares aspirations, fears, and hopes with everyone, I wish to leave you some reflections and exhortations, in memory of this family meeting.

1. The first thought, in this time of Lent which is now drawing to a close with the celebration of the central events of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ, cannot but be a call to *seek Jesus*. Let your life be a continual, sincere search for the Saviour, without ever tiring, without ever abandoning the undertaking; even though, at a certain moment, darkness should fall on your spirit, temptations beset you, and grief and incomprehension wring your heart. These are things which are part of life here below; they are inevitable, but they can also do good because they mature our spirit. You must never turn back, however, even if it should seem to you that the light of Christ, the "Light of the peoples", is fading; on the contrary, continue to seek with renewed faith and great generosity. Deepen your knowledge of Jesus, listening to the word of the Ministers of the Lord, and reading some pages of the Gospel. Try to discover where he is, and you will be able to gather from everyone some detail that will indicate it to you, that will tell you where he lives. Ask souls that are meek, repentant, generous, humble and hidden; ask your brothers, far and near, because you will find in everyone something that indicates Jesus to you. Ask, above all, your soul and your conscience, because they will be able to indicate to you, in an unmistakable way, a mark of his passing, a trace of his power and his love. But ask humbly: that is, let your soul be ready to see, outside itself, those parts of his goodness that God has sown in creatures. To seek him every day means possessing him a little more every day, being admitted a little at a time to intimacy with him; and then you will be able to understand better the sound of his voice, the meaning of his language, the reason for his coming to earth and for his sacrifice on the Cross.

2. I will say to you further, as second consignment, *have trust!* This word "trust" expands the lungs and gives wings to the heart; it gives relief beyond measure, it is something like emerging from a nightmare. Our age is to a great extent marked by anguish and apprehension, anxieties and fears. Trust is opposed to that which troubles you. It is, in fact, serenity of commitment, sovereign fearlessness in adversities, reliance on the mysterious but active assistance

of which Providence does not deprive anyone. Trust finds its greatest expression in the words spoken by Christ on the cross: "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit." (Lk 23:46). In the midst of the many, many difficulties, trust sustains you and makes you raise your eyes to Heaven, to tell the Father that when you have done everything, he should do that which is still lacking.³ Finally, *be agents of concord and peace*. In this time, marked to such a great extent by social divisions and so many forms of violence, it is necessary that you should bear witness before the world to Christian brotherhood in the environment in which you live and work. A decided commitment for the construction of a more human, just, and united world is needed. It is not intended thereby to deny the legitimate defence of inalienable rights, as well as the economic and social advancement of the less favoured and less remunerated workers, especially of the humblest, poorest, neediest and most oppressed. I am glad, in fact, to take this opportunity once more to deplore situations not in keeping with human and Christian dignity, in which, unfortunately, so many workers find themselves owing to unemployment or exhausting labour beyond the bounds of all endurance. Modern technology has often become, instead of an instrument of the advancement of man, a mechanism destined to crush him, to the extent of depriving him sometimes of his most sacred and inviolable characteristics. As I already mentioned in the recent Encyclical: "The development of technology and the development of contemporary civilization, which is marked by the ascendancy of technology, demand a proportional development of morals and ethics." (*Redemptor Hominis*, 15). On your return to your homes, your families, and your place of work, I would like to take my greeting and blessing to all your dear ones and to all your colleagues. Tell them all that I commend them in prayer to God and to the Blessed Virgin, so venerated by all true Genoese, under the title of Our Lady of Safekeeping, in her celebrated Sanctuary in Val Polcevera. I now put in her "safekeeping" your aspirations, your sufferings, and your labours, while I willingly impart the propitiating Apostolic Blessing. © Copyright 1979 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana