ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE BOYS AND GIRLS OF CATHOLIC ACTION *26 May 1979* *Beloved Boys and Girls of Catholic Action!*Welcome to this magnificent St Peter's Square.Be blessed all of you in the name of the Lord Jesus, the friend of children!I thank you heartily for the joyful manifestation of affection which you reserved for me as I was passing in your midst to extend my cordial and fatherly greeting to you—who are "my joy and crown" (Phil 4:1) because you express the face of the Church "without spot or wrinkle" (Eph 5:27)—and to all those who have accompanied you here: parents, teachers, diocesan and national leaders of Catholic Action for Boys and Girls. In particular, let my gratitude go to the Assistant General, Mons. Giuseppe Costanzo, and the National President, Prof. Mario Agnes, who asked for this Audience on the occasion of your National Meeting, with which you intend also to offer your contribution to the initiatives which are being promoted on all sides in the framework of the International Year of the Child.1. You have wished to meet the Pope on this day sacred to the memory of St Philip Neri, rightly described as the Apostle of the young owing to his long and indefatigable activity for their sake. Your meetings in Rome take place under his protection: the protection of him who succeeded so well in gathering around him the boys of the Roman suburbs and in educating them to the noble ideals of Christian faith and civil society! It is said that to aid the neediest, he did not hesitate to beg in the streets. One day a certain man, feeling that he was being pestered, slapped his face. The Saint answered with a smile: "That's for me, now give me some money for my boys." And to those who complained about the din they made, he would reply: "Provided they don't do wrong, I would be content for them to break my head." Such was his priestly love for the young that he did not hesitate to become for them a juggler for God, a master of truly evangelical merriment and joy, which he summed up in the famous motto: "Sadness and melancholy, get out of my house." On his grave, not far from here, in the Church of St Mary in Vallicella, where I will go shortly to celebrate Holy Mass, I will ask the Joint Patron Saint of Rome kindly to obtain for you, and for all young people in the world, serenity of spirit, nobility of heart, and unfailing consistency in evangelical witness in the environment in which you are called to live and operate.2. With regard to your gathering here in Rome, this concludes the initiatives you have undertaken in this month of May, which was for you "The month of meetings". I saw with pleasure the wall poster which, with its ingenious slogan: "Roger and over", sums up very well the last stage of the work carried out this year. This slogan, which you have taken from radio jargon, defines very well the Christian commitment to which each of you is called. That is, the commitment to listen to the Word of God and of men in order to

transmit it, in your turn, to others, just as Jesus said to his disciples: "What I tell you in the dark, utter in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim upon the housetops" (Mt 10:27). And you know how today can be seen on roofs forests of radio and television aerials which diffuse and pick up what is said in a broadcasting room.— Roger [received and understood]: this first term of your motto means also knowing how to listen, study more deeply, discover and live what you have "received" in your group life: at meetings, at school, in associations, in games, in technical applications, in which you get to know one another, exchange experiences, share your sentiments, discover the mark that other groups have left in the country or in the district, their enthusiasm and their goodwill. All this stock of ideas that you receive must not, however, remain lifeless and inactive in you but must, in the first place, serve to improve your person, enrich it, change it for the better, make you become capable young people. But above all it means being able to accept good inspirations, letting oneself be imbued with God's grace, aspiring to holiness, according to the Lord's words: "You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt 5:48).*Over:* all that you receive must not only not remain lifeless in you, but must also *go over,* that is, be given, communicated to others, as was done by the Apostles who scattered over the world to communicate and proclaim to all peoples the message of salvation they had received from their Master and ours, when he said: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Mt 28:19). You too will do this, if you feel in your hearts that you are "true living witnesses to Christ among (your) companions" (cf. Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, n. 12). And such you will be if you are able to manifest your joy in living, growing and loving; if you are able to overcome the deceptive lure of the senses; if you succeed in not being proud in relation to other boys and girls who are not so gifted and who are worse-off as regards social status; if you do not act selfishly; if you are not spiteful; if you do not revenge yourselves, but are able to forgive sincerely those who have offended you; if, in other words, you are able to live in an evangelical way. In this way you will certainly succeed in putting "over" your ideals to others, and they, seeing your good works, will give glory to the Father in heaven (cf. Mt 5:16).Dear boys and girls, on going home, tell your friends what the Pope has just suggested to you in memory of this fine audience in St Peter's Square. Tell them all that the Pope loves them, waits for their visit and blesses them, just as I now impart to you present here my special Apostolic Blessing, with the hope that, by means of the motherly help of the Virgin Mary, the mystical rose of the month of May, you will really be able to receive and pass on the Christian order of faith and hope, in praise and glory of God. © Copyright 1979 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

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