



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
FOR THE FIRST NATIONAL DAY OF YOUNG CATHOLICS
OF THE NETHERLANDS**

Dear young Friends,

I would like to send my cordial greetings to you all, gathered in Nieuwegein for the First National Day of Young Catholics of The Netherlands. I greet Cardinal Adrianus Simonis, Archbishop of Utrecht and President of the Bishops' Conference, and all the Dutch Bishops, expressing deep appreciation for the organization of this propitious initiative. I would then like to thank the Werkgroep Katholieke Jongeren for its work in these years and the priests and lay people involved in the pastoral care of youth, who are following you in your reflection.

With this Message, dear young people, I wish to make myself spiritually present among you and to assure you that I accompany you in prayer. I know that a great many of you took part in the [World Meeting at Cologne](#) and it therefore gives me great joy that you now want to continue the experience that began with [World Youth Day](#), involving others of your age who did not have the grace to take part in it. Holding today's meeting at the invitation of your Bishops is a very beautiful sign for Dutch society: it means that you are not afraid to say that you are Christians and want to witness to it openly.

In fact, the deepest reason for your gathering together is to encounter the Lord Jesus Christ. This is how it was for those who took part in the recent World Youth Day, whose theme was: *"We have come to worship him"* (Mt 2: 2). In the footsteps of the Magi, impelled by the yearning to seek the truth, young people from every corner of the earth met in Cologne to seek and worship God made Man, and then, transformed by their encounter with him and illumined by his presence, they returned to their country, like the Magi, "by another route" (Mt 2: 12). So it was that you returned to Holland, eager to communicate to one and all your rich experience, and today you want to share it with your peers.

Dear friends, Jesus is your true friend and Lord; enter into a relationship of true friendship with him! He is expecting you and in him alone will you find happiness.

How easy it is to be content with the superficial pleasures that daily life offers us; how easy it is to live only for oneself, apparently enjoying life! But sooner or later we realize that this is not true happiness, because true happiness is much deeper: we find it only in Jesus.

As I said in Cologne, "The happiness you are seeking, the happiness you have a right to enjoy, has a name and a face: it is Jesus of Nazareth" ([Address at the Poller Rheinwiesen Wharf, 18 August 2005; L'Osservatore Romano](#) English edition, 24 August, p. 4).

I therefore invite you every day to seek the Lord, who wants nothing more than for you to be truly happy. Foster an intense and constant relationship with him in prayer and, when possible, find suitable moments in your day to be alone in his company. If you do not know how to pray, ask him to teach you, and ask your heavenly Mother to pray with you and for you.

The recitation of the Rosary can help you learn the art of prayer with Mary's simplicity and depth. It is important that you make participation in the Eucharist, in which Jesus gives himself for us, the heart of your life. He who died for the sins of all desires to enter into communion with each one of you and is knocking at the doors of your hearts to give you his grace.

Go to the encounter with him in the Blessed Eucharist, go to adore him in the churches, kneeling before the Tabernacle: Jesus will fill you with his love and will reveal to you the thoughts of his Heart. If you listen to him, you will feel ever more deeply the joy of belonging to his Mystical Body, the Church, which is the family of his disciples held close by the bond of unity and love.

You will also learn, as the Apostle Paul says, to let yourselves be reconciled with God (cf. II Cor 5: 20). Especially in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Jesus waits for you to forgive you your sins and reconcile you with his love through the ministry of the priest. By confessing your sins humbly and truthfully, you will receive the pardon of God himself through the words of his minister.

What a great opportunity the Lord has given us with this sacrament to renew ourselves from within and to progress in our Christian life! I recommend that you make good use of it all the time!

Dear friends, as I said to you above, if you follow Jesus, you will never feel lonely because you are part of the Church, which is a great family in which you can grow in true friendship with so many brothers and sisters in the faith scattered in every part of the world. Jesus needs you to "renew" contemporary society.

Take care to grow in the knowledge of the faith in order to be its authentic witnesses. Dedicate yourselves to understanding Catholic doctrine ever better: even if at times in looking at it with the

eyes of the world it may seem a difficult message to accept, in it is the answer that satisfies your basic questions.

Trust your Pastors and guides, Bishops and priests; become actively involved in the parishes, movements, associations and Ecclesial Communities to experience together the joy of being followers of Christ, who proclaims and gives truth and love. And truly impelled by his truth and love, you will be able, together with other young people who are seeking the true meaning of life, to build a better future for all.

Dear friends, I am close to you with my prayers. May you generously accept the call of the Lord, who holds up to you great ideals that can make your lives beautiful and full of joy. You can be certain of it: only by responding positively to his appeal, however demanding it may seem to you, is it possible to find happiness and peace of heart.

May the Virgin Mary accompany you on this journey of Christian commitment, and may she help you in all your good resolutions.

With these sentiments, I cordially impart a special Apostolic Blessing to all of you who are gathered in Nieuwegein, as well as to those who accompany you with love and wisdom on your path of human and spiritual growth.

From the Vatican, 21 November 2005

BENEDICTUS PP. XVI