



The Holy See

JOHN PAUL II

ANGELUS

Castel Gandolfo

Sunday, 8 August 2004

1. Two days ago, on the Feast of the Transfiguration, we commemorated the anniversary of the death of the Servant of God Paul VI. This anniversary has acquired special significance because exactly 40 years ago my venerable Predecessor published his first Encyclical, *Ecclesiam Suam*.

From the beginning of that memorable Document, he declared his passionate love for the Church, called to mirror the glorious light of the face of Christ; and he pointed out certain fundamental "paths of the Church": *self-knowledge, renewal and dialogue*. "The Church", he wrote, "is more alive today than ever before. But when we weigh the matter more closely we see that there is still a great way to go. In fact, the work which is beginning today will never come to an end" (Website of the Holy See, *Ecclesiam Suam*, n. 117; cf. also nn. 9, 11, 12).

These words retain their full timeliness and are an incentive to all believers to continue with awareness *the authentic ecclesial renewal* that began with the Second Vatican Council.

2. In a few days the 28th celebration of the *Olympic Games* will be inaugurated in Athens. I send my cordial greetings to the official delegations, to the national representatives, to the athletes and to all who will be taking part in the Olympics. As I remember the cordiality with which the Greek people welcomed me on the occasion of my pilgrimage in the footsteps of the Apostle Paul, I would also like to greet with special warmth the City of Athens.

I deeply hope that in the world today, disturbed and sometimes overwhelmed by so many forms of hatred and violence, the important sports event of the Games will be *an opportunity for a friendly encounter* and will serve to further *peace and understanding among the peoples*.

3. Upon the Olympics and upon the whole of the world of sport I invoke the maternal protection of the Most Holy Virgin.

I would also like to entrust to Mary the pilgrimage which, please God, I will be making to the [Shrine of Lourdes](#) next Saturday and Sunday, to celebrate the Assumption of Mary on the 150th anniversary of the proclamation of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

After the Angelus, the Pope said the following:

I greet you, dear French-speaking pilgrims, and I entrust you to Our Lady of Lourdes, to whose shrine I will be going on [pilgrimage](#) next Saturday and Sunday.

I warmly welcome the English-speaking visitors, especially the Canadian Cascade Band. May Mary, Queen of Heaven, be close to all of you during these summer days, and may Almighty God bless you.

I am pleased to greet the German-speaking pilgrims and visitors. Keep yourselves ready for the second coming of the Lord! Entrust your lives to him as Mary did! May God preserve you in his love.

I greet the Spanish-speaking pilgrims. I invite you to call on the Virgin Mary, our hope because of her Immaculate Conception and her motherly intercession. A happy Sunday to you all!

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