



The Holy See

PILGRIMAGE OF THE CATHOLIC YOUTH COUNCIL OF DUBLIN

HOMILY OF JOHN PAUL II

Castelgandolfo, 28 August 1980

Dear young people of Dublin,

1. The love of Christ has gathered us together morning! Nothing else can adequately explain our marvellous unity. We have come together in the name of Jesus, and he is present with us. Jesus Christ is in our midst.

2. You have come to Rome as representatives of the youth of Dublin; you have wished to return the visit that I made to you in Ireland. At the same time you are giving me another opportunity to speak to you about Christ, to remind you of your Christian dignity, and to proclaim to you a fellowship that the Holy Spirit has given to all of us: a fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

3. You have come here, moreover, so that all of us together may celebrate our life in Christ, and through the merits of his redemption find ever greater communion with the Most Holy Trinity. A wonderful aspect of our Eucharist is that, in it, we bring to Christ the fabric of our daily lives. He accepts our offering, unites it to his own oblation, and presents it to his eternal Father. At the same time, in the Mass, we listen to God's word as proclaimed by the Church - a proclamation that reaches its highest expression in the very renewal of Christ's Sacrifice. As we celebrate this Eucharistic Sacrifice we are performing an action that is at the very summit of our Christian dignity is realized to the full. And all of this is something that we are doing together as a community, a community in Christ and with Christ, as members of his Body, members of his holy Church.

And from this Eucharistic celebration you will go out to fulfil your calling, the activities of your life, and finally your destiny. For a few moments, therefore, let us reflect, within this sacred context of

God's word, on these important elements of the Christian life.

4. Each one of you is individually called by Christ, called to be part of his Kingdom and to play a role in his mission of salvation. These are the great realities of your Baptism and your Confirmation.

Having called you by name, God sends you forth to accomplish what he wants you to do. He says to each of you what he said to Jeremiah the Prophet: "I am with you to protect you". He seals his protection over you by putting his words into your mouth. In the expression of the Psalmist, the word of God becomes for you a lamp for your feet and a light for your path. Christ calls you to lead a new life based on the Beatitudes, with new criteria of judgment, a fresh spiritual outlook and a transformed pattern of life. Incorporated into the newness of Christ's own life, only a constant turning to him will give you fulfilment and joy. A repeated conversion of heart becomes the condition for the usefulness of your activities and for the attainment of your destiny.

5. As you pursue your fundamental Christian calling, you will be summoned to perform joyfully and faithfully the activities of each moment, each day, each week. For most of you, the field of your activities in the secular world itself in need of the Gospel leaven. Your task is crystal clear: to bring Christ to the world and to bring the world to Christ. I am sure that you have already grasped all of this. Is this not the context of your motto: "To do more, to love more, to serve more"?

This "doing", this "loving", this "serving" must be expressed in many ways. You are called, for instance, to be men and women of honesty and integrity: "to live in truth and love" according to the petition of this morning's Mass. You are called to open your hearts to the justice of the Gospel, so that in turn you may be instruments of justice and builders of peace.

You are young and you are rightfully looking for understanding from others - from your elders, your priests, your beloved parents, all who make up the preceding generations of society - and you are hoping for the compassion of friendship. But precisely because you are young with the vitality of Christ's grace and share enthusiasm for his message, you know that there is something even higher and more noble; hence it becomes possible for you to pray "not so much to be understood, as to understand; to be loved as to love". And so you are called to be leaders of the next generation through understanding and love. Dear young people: Is not almost a half of your Archdiocese made up of young people under twenty-one? Can you have any doubt but that the future of Dublin and the rest of Ireland really does depend on your generosity, your commitment to Christ and your service to your brothers and sisters?

You are called to understand each other, to work together, to walk together the path of life - together with each other and with Christ - to respect humanity in everyone, even in those who have lost a sense of their own dignity. You must find Christ in others, and give Christ to others - the Christ who alone is the hope of the world! In all the circumstances of your lives you are called

to be bearers of a message of hope, called to be ready, in the words of Saint Peter, with an answer for anyone who asks you "to account for the hope that is in you". With this hope, with understanding and love, equipped with all the principles of your Catholic faith, you will be able to face serenely the issues of daily living. And you can be sure that Mary, Mother of Jesus and bright "Sun of the Irish race" will always assist you by her intercession.

Complicated social and economic problems are not subject to facile solutions. Nevertheless, a perseverance born of hope and a fraternal commitment to the needs of one's brothers and sisters are indispensable conditions for real progress in these fields. Your Christian calling urges you to make your contribution - great or small, but always unique and irreplaceable - to building up a just and peaceful society. And this same Christian calling invites you, individually and all together, to help - through prayer, sacrifice, personal Christian discipline and a number of ways open to your own creative initiative - to bring the Gospel of salvation into the lives of many people. The parish needs you and your contribution of Christian living. The community needs your vitality, your joy, your efforts at working together for the good of all. Even the Creator himself has asked for your cooperation in sustaining his creation. Be convinced always that your daily work has great value in the eyes of God. Make every effort to ensure that its quality is worthy of Christ and his members.

And remember too that Christ wants to accept the gift of your work and of your lives, and offer them to his Father. In fact, he is doing this right now, in this Eucharist.

I have already mentioned the need to turn constantly to Christ and to be ever newly converted to him. Christian living is not complete without this renewed conversion, and conversion is not fully authentic without the Sacrament of Penance. Dear young people of Dublin: Christ wants to come to meet you regularly, frequently, in a personal way, in a personal encounter of loving mercy, forgiveness and healing. He wants to sustain you in your weakness and keep lifting you up, drawing you closer to his heart. As I explained in my Encyclical "Redemptor Hominis", the encounter of this Sacrament is a right that belongs to Christ and to each of you. And so the Pope is very much in earnest when he now exhorts you: Do not deprive Christ of his right in this Sacrament, and never surrender your own.

6. And finally, dear young people, from this Eucharist you will go out to fulfil your destiny. This fulfilment depends on God's grace - as the feast of Saint Augustine so forcefully recalls to us today. But it also requires the assent of your free will. You must repeatedly say yes to Christ, in order to ensure the success of your unique part in God's plan for the salvation of the world. Here we must reflect again on the importance of fidelity to your calling. I have mentioned on other occasions how much the course of history has been shaped in Ireland and throughout the world by the fidelity of one man - the fidelity of Saint Patrick. The proportion may be different but the principle is the same: Christ has a special work for each one of you, a work that only you can do. Without your cooperation it would remain undone. Christ directs each of you, in a personal way, towards a destiny, for the attainment of which we are interdependent. Look to him today - look to

Christ.

Accept his offer as he extends his hand to you, embraces you with the strength of his arm, and reveals to you the love of his Sacred Heart.

7. And now, in conclusion, let me add just one more word. When I was in Galway, I told all those present there that I believe in youth with all my heart, that I believe in the youth of Ireland, every one of you. And today I would like to add something to that message, and it is this: Because of what Christ has given you, because of his own free gift of life and grace, he believes in you. Christ believes in youth, the youth of Ireland, every one of you. And he loves you. Young people of Dublin, Christ loves you! Christ loves you and wants to love through you! Amen.

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