



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC PILGRIMAGE
TO NORWAY, ICELAND, FINLAND,
DENMARK AND SWEDEN

EUCCHARISTIC CELEBRATION
AT "IDRETTSBYGGET" SPORTING CENTRE

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

Technical University of Trondheim (Norway)
Friday, 2 June 1989

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Text in Norwegian

1. Kjære brødre og søstre i Midt-Norge!

Jeg er glad for å kunne feire festen till ære for Jesu helligste hjerte sammen med dere her i Trondheim. Dere kommer fra menighetene i Alesund, Molde, Kristiansund, Levanger og Trondheim.

Mange av dere har gjort en stor innsats for å forberede denna dagen. Dét gleder jeg meg over og takker dere alle!

You have come, like the pilgrims of old, to this revered city of Nidaros (now Trondheim) and *shrine of Saint Olav*, who heralded a new era of Christianity and unification in this land even though he did not live to see the fruits of his labour. His son, Magnus the Good, built the first wooden church on this site and it quickly became a place of pilgrimage. Already by the year 1060 a liturgy dedicated to Saint Olav was in use as far away as Northumberland in Britain. In the Orthodox Church too, the memory of Saint Olav is greatly venerated: to his intercession was attributed the

survival of the Imperial Guard of Constantinople in an hour of danger when it went into battle with Emperor Alexos against the Bulgars.

The *Eucharist* has been the focus of countless numbers of people who have come here down the centuries. In the Eucharist we receive Christ, who instituted this Sacrament so that he might remain with us and live in us. Could there possibly be any greater gift? Christ redeemed the world with the Sacrifice of his Body and Blood. In doing so, he provides us with *food and drink* for eternal life. This sacramental food, under the signs of bread and wine, truly “refreshes our souls”. Indeed it leads us along the paths of faith, hope and charity all the days of our life so that we can “live in the house of the Lord”.

“The Lord is my shepherd,
I shall not want” (*Ps. 23 (22), 1*).

Today’s liturgy places these words of the Psalmist on the lips of the children who are going to receive their *First Holy Communion* at this Mass. It is only right that they should pray these beautiful words today when Our Lord and Saviour prepares a *Eucharistic* table for them for the first time. The words “The Lord is my shepherd” express an unlimited hope which they can repeat whenever they receive *Jesus, the Bread of life*.

2. The Scripture readings for this Mass set before us the figure of the Good Shepherd. The Prophets of the Old Testament use this image to speak about the God who had freed his Chosen People, Israel, from slavery in Egypt and had shown them special love. God is *the Shepherd who cares for the sheep*, watching them lest they scatter. He feeds his flock, looking for “green pastures” so that they may graze well. He even finds quiet places where they can rest undisturbed. *With loving care* he looks after the whole flock – not only *all* the sheep but also *each one* individually. He is concerned with, the welfare of every lamb and every sheep in his care. This is the image of the Good Shepherd which the Prophet Ezekiel portrays in our first reading.

In the fullness of time Jesus confirmed and perfected the prophetic vision of *the Good Shepherd by laying down his life for the sheep* (Cfr. *Io. 10, 11*). This refers to his Sacrifice on the Cross, by which he gave himself for the life of the world (Cfr. *ibid. 6, 51*) – for all and for each one individually. Of this Saint Paul writes: “While we were yet sinners Christ died for us” (*Rom. 5, 8*). By dying Christ offered himself in sacrifice to the Father and *through this redeeming sacrifice he revealed the Father’s love for us*. Saint Paul teaches that we were reconciled to God by the death of Jesus and justified by his blood. Now that we are reconciled, we shall be saved by his life (Cfr. *ibid. 5, 9-10*). This is the mystery of God’s love for his sheep – his infinite, unchanging love – which prompts him to go in search of the one that is lost (Cfr. *Luc. 15, 4*).

This mystery was further revealed to us the night before Christ’s death on the Cross when he instituted the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. The Eucharist is the Sacrifice of Calvary

sacramentally realized on our altars, whereby the Crucified and Risen Son of God is still *alive* among us. It is precisely his risen life which *he wishes to communicate to us*. As true God and true man, he shares this new life with us in the Eucharist, when we receive him under the appearances of bread and wine.

3. I am told that sheep can be seen grazing nearly everywhere in Norway from early spring to late autumn. Undoubtedly, they will often stray in dangerous places, and if they wander too far they risk being lost or falling prey to other dangers. *In our journey through life, we too risk getting lost*. We hear so many conflicting voices calling us one way or another. So today it is appropriate for each one of us to ask ourselves: *Where do I really stand?* Am I one of the lost sheep that needs to be carried home on the shoulders of the Good Shepherd? He is always searching for us, calling us to turn away from the false and misleading roads along which we may wander. *He is always calling us to repentance*: to a restoration of communion with God and with one another when we have sinned, and to ever greater holiness as members of his Church.

Through conversion we must also grow in love and respect for the whole of Christ's flock. Compared to many other places, Norway is a rich country. The very name *Trondheim* reminds us of this – it means "*riches of the earth*". Many people look with admiration at your democratic society. Social trends in your country attract worldwide attention. In this context, however, you are called not to forget *the children, the sick, the handicapped and the elderly*. All people deserve and need to be cared for as God's loved ones; they constitute a treasure from which we all benefit. The best gift you can give your children is a heart that is fully human, a heart that is sensitive to good and evil. The best gift you can give the sick, the handicapped and the elderly is the respect due to them as sons and daughters of the same heavenly Father. They deserve your time, your individual attention and your love. Their example and their patience will enrich your own lives and the lives of all who approach them with compassionate concern.

4. My brothers and sisters: I know that most of you who have come here today to celebrate *your unity in faith* with the Successor of Saint Peter belong to small congregations. Many of you probably live far from a church. You have experienced what it means to belong to a religious minority, especially since *many of the Catholics in Central Norway come from abroad*. Those of you from other countries may miss the *language, culture and way of life* of your homeland, and also the familiar Catholic Church with her prayers, hymns and ceremonies. But I want to tell each of you that the Pope, the Church's Universal Pastor, loves you. He comes in the name of Christ, the Good Shepherd, and you have a special place in his heart.

He admires your fidelity and perseverance. And today he is here to encourage you to put all your trust in God's love!

Sett all deres tillit til Guds kärlighet.

Hãy đặt trọn niềm tin vào tình yêu của Chúa.

Poned toda vuestra confianza en el amor de Dios.

Złóćcie całą waszą, nadzieję w Miłości Boga!

Those of you who are Norwegian by birth and ancestry realize that immigrants too add to the riches of the nation. In the best traditions of this country, you have given your new citizens a chance to begin again in freedom, with all the opportunities that society offers. In this way, you set a noble example for others to follow. Human diversity enriches every level of society, and so I encourage the whole community to continue to grant those who have settled in your midst *a real place* in society by according them the respect and the rights which you yourselves enjoy.

5. *The Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus which we celebrate today invites us to see and love Christ in all people*, and to reflect his love for them in our own lives. For generations the Church has prayed: "Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make our hearts like unto thine". Today I wish to recall this familiar prayer and to recite it on your behalf: Jesus, *make our hearts like unto thine*. And in doing so, I give special thanks to God for the example of the *Picpus Missionaries* of the Sacred Hearts, who for more than fifty years have supplied this region with priests and have done so often under very difficult conditions. Dear Brothers: Today, on your great feast, I encourage you in your priestly ministry and I offer you the gratitude of the whole Church for your generosity and zeal.

I also wish to *thank the Sisters* of the religious congregations who have shown the love of Christ in a remarkable way to everyone but especially to the children, the sick and the elderly. The service you have given is a living sermon which can be understood by all. May the Good Shepherd continue to watch over you and bless you in your commitment.

6. My final words today are addressed to the children: Kjaere dere barn som gar til kommunion for første gang idag.

Denne dagen er en viktig begivenhet for dere. For første gang far dere invitasjon til a ga til kommunion. Jeg er litt overrasket over a se *hvor mange land dere kommer fra*. Mange av dere snakker ikk ebare norsk, men ogsa vietnamesisk, polsk, spansk, engelsk eller andre sprak. De foreldre og prester som har gitt dere undervisning, har fortalt meg at dere har hatt det *veldig fint sammen*. Dette er et *forbilde* for den voksne i hele verden. Dere viser at *alle* mennesker hører til *kirkens fellesskap*.

Vi er samlet her fordi Jesus kaller pa oss - slik han kalte pa tolleren Sakkeus. Jesus vil *feire en fest sammen med oss*. Og han gir oss i gave det beste han har *i sitt hellige legeme og sitt hellige blod*.

Forberedelsene til denne dagen har gitt dere *mye glede*. *Ta vare pa den*. Deres prester, foreldre og ungdommene vil sikkert hjelpe dere med det.

Helt till slutt vil jeg rette noen ord til *dere foreldre*. Mange av dere har hjulpet til med a forberede denne dagen, og jeg *takker dere av hele mitt hjerte*. Samtidig vil jeg be dere om a gjøre alt dere kan for at barna deres kan finne *et hjem i kirkens fellesskap*.

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