



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO THE APOSTOLIC MOVEMENT OF THE BLIND

Clementine Hall

Saturday, 9 December 1978

Beloved Sons,

First of all I express my sincere joy at meeting you today, ecclesiastical Consultants, national Councillors, and missionary Delegates of the over sixty diocesan groups of the "Apostolic Movement of the Blind", which is celebrating these days the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation.

My joy is accompanied by deep satisfaction at the merits that the Movement has won in these long years, marked by silent sacrifice, serious commitment, and constant dedication in order to spur on and help sightless brothers—children, young people, and old—to take their place in a personal and responsible way in the life of the Church and civil society, to mature interiorly their own path with Christ, and to offer an external, consistent and limpid testimony of their profession of faith in the Gospel message. The goodness and fruitfulness of your multiform activity have been confirmed by the irrepressible necessity of expanding and spreading your initiatives in favour also of the sightless in the Third World. For ten years your Movement has—we can say—set up little missionary stations in Brazil, Guinea Bissau, the Central African Empire, Kenya, the Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, that is, in particular, in great Africa. Well done! Really well done! I read with deep emotion the reports contained in your fine review.

This glance of mine and yours at the past is certainly a motive of pleasure and satisfaction; but it is necessary to look also and above all to the future. Millions of sightless sisters and brothers in the whole world are waiting from us, if not for the miracle of cure, for understanding, solidarity, affection and help; in a word, for our true charity, based on faith. And it is this very faith that must operate in us by means of charity (cf. Gal 5:6), as St Paul tells us. Keep well in mind the recommendation of Jesus: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works

and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Mt 5: 16).

Continue this apostolic work of yours with enthusiasm, with commitment. Do not let yourselves be cast down by difficulties or discouragement. I have pleasure in quoting to you the words, so topical, that St Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, who was martyred in Rome about the year 107, addressed to the Christians of Ephesus: "As the tree is known by its fruits, so those who call themselves disciples of Christ will be known by their works. Today it is not a question of professing faith with words, but there is necessary the deep strength of a living and active faith in order to be found faithful until the end" (Letter to the Ephesians, XIV, 2).

On you, on all the members of the Movement, on all the sightless, I invoke the grace, the strength and the comfort of Christ, "the light of the world" (cf. Jn 1:5, 9; 3:19; 8: 12; 9:5; 12:46), and I willingly impart a special Apostolic Blessing.

© Copyright 1978 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

Copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana