



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE
OF THE MARY WARD SCHOOLS**

Saturday, 5 October 1985

*Dear Friends,
Dear Young People,*

I know that you have been looking forward to this meeting. The Pope has too. So let us together thank our Father in heaven for the faith and Christian life that unites us in the Church, the Body of Christ!

I am truly happy that you are *commemorating the Fourth Centenary of the birth of Mary Ward with this pilgrimage to Rome*. It is an occasion for you to discover better the special spirit that animates the international family of the Mary Ward Schools. It is also an occasion for you to reflect on the life and work of this great woman, who knew so well how to harmonize the demands of her life as a faithful member of the Church with the new requirements of the age in which she lived.

I pray too that your visit to Rome will give you a deeper love of the Church as the universal family of the followers of Christ.

1. My friends, you are in that wonderful time of life called youth. These years of your lives are a significant stage in your personal history, as well as in the history of your families and of society.

This is International Youth Year. On Palm Sunday I wrote a letter to you and to the youth of the whole world about your specific role and responsibility at this moment of history, and about Christ's message of life and love to young people: "In you there is hope, for you belong to the future just as the future belongs to you" (IOANNIS PAULI PP.II, *Epistula Apostolica ad iuvenes, Internationali vertente Anno luventuti dicato, 1, die 31 mar. 1985: Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, VIII, 1 (1985) 757 s.*).

With these words I wished to invite you young people to recognize the great challenges that lie before you as you propose to lead your societies and the entire human family along the paths of progress, justice and peace. I also wished to point out that your success in this will depend on how far you open your hearts to the truth and love of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. If you ask yourselves what resources, *what ideals, values and truths* you possess in order to face the responsibilities of the Year 2000, and in order to begin the Third Millennium in a spirit of universal brotherhood, then you must turn to the theme of this International gathering: "*Behold, I am going before you*".

Yes, Christ is going before you to show you the way!

These words remind us of the Risen Lord. They recall the message of the angel to the women at the tomb: "Do not be afraid; for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has risen . . . and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him" (*Matth. 28, 5-7*).

Saint Luke is even clearer. According to his account, the angels asked the women: "*Why do you seek the living among the dead?*" (*Luc. 24, 5*).

Why do you seek the living among the dead?

Yes, Christ is living still. His Death and Resurrection, which gave him power over sin and death, are the very source of our hope. They mark the cornerstone of the Christian vision of life and history. It is a vision that is essentially optimistic, because it believes in our ability to choose good over evil, to choose peace over violence and hatred.

Naturally, to discover the power of Christ and to share in his saving mission *we must approach him in openness and trust*.

Your visit to Rome has given you the opportunity to pray at the tomb of Saint Peter. Who was this Peter? The Gospels tell us that he was a humble fisherman from a small village in Galilee.

One day Jesus asked the disciples what people said about who he was. After they had given different answers, Jesus asked them directly: "But who do you say that I am?" (*Matth. 16, 15*). Peter answered: "*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God*".

Peter was the first of the disciples to make this explicit act of faith in Jesus. On that faith, as on a rock, Jesus built the Church - the assembly of those who profess their faith in Christ and live according to his teachings. Peter's faith is a model for your response to Christ in openness and trust.

3. Young people of the Mary Ward Schools, before you leave Rome to go back to your homes and families, *take courage and give your response to Jesus Christ!*

He will not fail you. Just as he did not fail Mary Ward. No matter how great were the difficulties which she had to undergo - ill-health; dangerous journeys; imprisonment; above all, being misunderstood even by important people within the Church - in all of this she never lost her trust and good humour. And look how fruitful her life has been! All because she built her whole life on the friendship of Jesus.

To the members of the Institutes which have as their Foundress this "incomparable woman" - as Pope Pius XII called her - I wish to express my greetings and appreciation. *The whole Church admires the work that you do in the formation of the young and in other forms of apostolate* in various parts of the world. As members of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Loreto and of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Toronto, you find in the charism of your Foundress the wisdom and insights needed to persevere in the mission which Christ has entrusted to you. Continue to live your vocation in joy and humility, as true daughters of that Pilgrim of hope whose abiding treasure was *the life of grace within her*, from which she draw energies for a task which because of its dynamism and enterprising spirit seemed unusual and inexplicable to many of her contemporaries.

May the Blessed Virgin Mary intercede for your Institutes, that they may flourish with new members and give ever increasing testimony of holiness and zeal!

To all of you, and to your families and friends at home, I say: *be strong, be happy in your Christian life!* Make our Lord Jesus Christ your best friend! May God bless you!

Liebe Schwestern und Brüder der weltweiten Maria-Ward-Familie!

Zu Ehren dieser großen Frau und Ordensgründerin aus England habe ich mich zuerst in englischer Sprache an euch gewandt. Dabei vertraue ich darauf, daß die überaus große Gruppe unter euch aus Deutschland und Österreich meine Worte ebenfalls verstanden hat, weil ihr die englische Sprache gewiß gut beherrscht.

Wie zahlreiche andere vorbildliche und heiligmäßige Christen der Vergangenheit hat Maria Ward die engen Grenzen ihrer eigenen Nation überschritten und auch in anderen Kulturen und Sprachen ihr fruchtbares Wirken entfaltet. Auf der Grundlage eines starken Vertrauens in Gottes Führung und in die weltweite Sendung der Kirche hat ihr Erziehungswerk auch in fremden Ländern Heimat gefunden und so auch dort die Botschaft Christi unermüdlich weitervermitteln können.

Diese großen Christen haben der Kirche Jesu Christi einen wichtigen Dienst erwiesen: Sie haben

ihr konkret geholfen, Menschen verschiedenster Sprachen und Kulturen auf den Weg der Gotteskindschaft zu führen und sie über alle Grenzen und Schranken hinaus zu einer Auf diese Weise konnte und kann die Kirche immer wieder wahrhaft katholisch werden, allumfassend und offen für jeden, der Gott ehrlichen Herzens sucht und die erprobten Wege zu ihm hin beschreitet.

Euch jungen Menschen wünsche ich von Herzen, daß euch das Leben und Lernen in euren Schulen hilft, diese große Weite und Offenheit zu erwerben. Sie ist ja zugleich auch Voraussetzung für wahren Frieden und echte Gerechtigkeit unter den Menschen.

Unser Herr Jesus Christus segne euch auf die Fürsprache seiner Mutter Maria; er segne euren Alltag und eure Feste, eure Sorgen und eure Freuden, eure Hoffnungen und eure Ängste. Er sagt auch euch allen und jedem einzelnen: "Ich gehe euch voraus".

Vaya también mi más cordial saludo a los jóvenes y a las jóvenes aquí presentes procedentes de España, Chile, Argentina y Brasil.

Que esta peregrinación al centro de la catolicidad con motivo del IV Centenario de Mary Ward os afiance en vuestra fe y os infunda nuevo entusiasmo en vuestro empeño por construir una sociedad más justa, pacífica y fraterna.

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