



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II TO THE "CURSILLOS DE CRISTIANDAD" MOVEMENT

Saturday, 29 July 2000

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

1. I am pleased to extend my affectionate greeting to all of you who have come here from the five continents for the *Third World Ultreya* of the *Cursillos de Cristiandad*, the *Ultreya* of the Great Jubilee. Thank you for your visit and welcome to all.

I greet the Spanish-speaking *cursillistas* who have come from America and from Spain, recalling that this apostolic experience was founded in Palma de Mallorca by Bishop Juan Hervás, the zealous Pastor of that ecclesial community.

I welcome each one of you and encourage you to make this *Ultreya* of the Great Jubilee a time of renewed commitment to holiness of life and to the apostolate.

I extend a cordial welcome to all the French-speaking participants.

I very cordially greet all who are with us from German-speaking countries. May this celebration strengthen your faith.

I greet the President of the World Organization of the *Cursillos de Cristiandad* and thank him for his cordial words to me in your name, and for presenting your movement's apostolic commitment and the good which the Lord works through you. I greet the movement's founders, spiritual leaders and various officers. Your presence here, so varied and festive, shows that the tiny seed planted in Spain more than 50 years ago has become a great tree laden with fruits of the Spirit. Indeed, it continues to be a successful response to the question asked by my venerable Predecessor Pope Paul VI at the first world *Ultreya* in Rome: "Can the Gospel still win over the mature person ... in urban and rural cultures?" (AAS, 58, 1966, 503).

I am therefore delighted to join in your thanksgiving to the Lord for all he has done and never ceases to do in the Church through the *Cursillos de Cristiandad*.

The theme of this world Ultreya - "Evangelizing the Milieus of the Third Millennium: A 'Challenge' for the Cursillos de Cristiandad" - demonstrates your effort to repropose the experience of Christ to the men and women of the 21st century with new means and enthusiasm. This has become even more urgent, since "whole countries and nations, where religion and the Christian life were formerly flourishing and capable of fostering a viable and working community of faith, are now put to a hard test ... as a result of the constant spread of indifference to religion, of secularism and atheism" (*Christifideles laici*, n. 34).

2. In view of this situation which challenges believers to "remake the Christian fabric of the ecclesial community" (ibid.), the *Cursillo* method aims at helping to transform in a Christian way the milieus where people live and work through the involvement of "new men and women" who have become such from their encounter with Christ. This is the goal of the three-day "little course" on Christianity, in which a team of priests and lay people, supported by the prayer and sacrifices of the movement's other members, communicate the fundamental truths of the Christian faith in an especially "living" way. When presented in this way, the message of Christ almost always opens participants in a *cursillo* to the gift of conversion and to a deeper awareness of the Baptism they have received and of their own mission in the Church. They feel called to be the prophetic "leaven" which is kneaded into the dough so that the whole mass will rise (*Mt* 13: 33), to be the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world" (*Mt* 5: 13-14), to proclaim to everyone they meet that only in Jesus Christ is there salvation (*Acts* 4: 12), and that it is "only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man truly becomes clear" (*Gaudium et spes*, n. 22).

3. Dear brothers and sisters, be the courageous witnesses of the "*service of the Truth*" and work ceaselessly with the "*strength of communion*". In relying on your rich spiritual experiences, which are a treasure, take up the "challenge" that our time raises to the new evangelization and fearlessly give it your own response.

Faced with a culture that often denies the very existence of an objective Truth of universal value and frequently loses its way in the "shifting sands" of nihilism (cf. *Fides et ratio*, n. 5), the faithful must know how to show clearly that Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life (cf. *Jn* 14: 6).

You who have generously opened your hearts to Jesus are being asked by him to proclaim his name untiringly to those who do not yet know him. He is calling you to his service, to the service of his Truth, the truth which makes us free.

The more transparent this "*diakonia* of the truth" becomes in your daily lives, the more convincing it will be. As you are reminded in a prayer often used in the *Cursillo* Movement, "Christ has no hands, he has only our hands to change the world today. Christ has no feet, he has only our feet

to lead this world to himself. Christ has no lips, he has only our lips to speak to the people".

4. This is your apostolate, carried out in constant harmony with the Church, to show the "*strength of communion*" which is at once the style and the very essence of the People of God. As you face the various forms of individualism which fragment and divide your evangelizing ability and resources, join your missionary forces with those of the various ecclesial groups raised up by the Spirit in the Church of our time. Endeavour to restore the beauty of the first Christian communities which prompted pagans to say with admiration: "See how they love one another!". And always be docile to the directives of the Magisterium. No charism, in fact, dispenses you from referring and submitting to the Pastors of the Church, whose discernment is a guarantee of fidelity for the charism itself. May the Jubilee celebration instil in all of you a renewed fidelity to your original inspiration and a firmer ecclesial communion.

5. "Bright colours deck the fields in springtime.
Bright colours clothe the little birds outside.
Bright colours paint the rainbow we see shining..."

During the days of a *cursillo*, the words of this popular Spanish song help the participants to reflect on the multifaceted beauty of creation. In encountering Christ, you have learned to look with new eyes at others and at nature, at everyday events and at life in general. You have experienced that true happiness is found in following the Lord. This personal and community experience must be passed on to others. Many men and women of our time, who unfortunately turn away from God, expect from you the light of faith that will help them rediscover the colours of life and the happiness of feeling loved by God.

"Courage! *Ultreya!* Go forth!", the Successor of Peter repeats to you today. Look to Mary, an example of unflinching fidelity to God, and, like her, put your trust in every circumstance in God, the Father of Mercy, who guards your steps on the way of truth and love.

I extend the same cordial greetings to all the other pilgrims who have gathered here. In particular, to those of the Diocese of Leiria-Fátima, led by their Pastor, dear Bishop Serafim:

Dear brothers and sisters!

Two months have passed since I had the pleasure of being among you, enjoying your warm hospitality and witnessing your radiant joy at seeing the holiness of two of your compatriots confirmed: Blessed Francisco and Jacinta Marto. In seeing you here today - as the chosen representatives of this local Church - I see my visit repaid: you have come to the tomb of the Prince of the Apostles in a spirit of prayer and penance to implore pardon and forgiveness, and to renew your dedicated commitment to that work of divinizing humanity which began 2,000 years ago with the birth of the God made man.

I cordially greet the whole Diocese of Leiria-Fátima, with my wish that this Great Jubilee of the Incarnation will be for you all that "year of the Lord's favour" which became a reality with Jesus and in Jesus (cf. *Lk* 4: 19-21), so that you can hope confidently in the power of his message and saving work, love everyone with self-giving love and reparation for the ingratitude to God of so many, and witness to faith courageously and consistently in today's society.

May the Virgin Most Holy, mystically present in your Marian shrines, the most distinguished of which, by her choice, is the Shrine of Fátima, grant you her motherly guidance on your journey of penance and conversion, and support you in the fulfilment of your good intentions for your Diocese and for the world's salvation.

I cordially greet the pilgrims from Poland who have come to this meeting. I thank you for your commitment to the new evangelization and to building the civilization of love and solidarity in the world. The Church needs you! She needs your Christian attitude and your holiness, so that she can carry out the great work of salvation in the world.

I affectionately assure you of a constant remembrance in my prayer and impart my Apostolic Blessing to you all, as a pledge of abundant divine graces.

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