



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE MEMBERS
OF FOCOLARI MOVEMENT'S "GEN 3"**

Dear Boys and Girls of "GEN 3",

1. I greet you with joy and affection on the occasion of your *Supercongress* that every five years gathers thousands of young people from many countries of the world around a great ideal: *the ideal of unity*. In fact, you are called "youth for unity".

I greet each one of you personally, and I would like my Message to reach each one's mind and heart. I thank *Cardinal Francis Arinze* who is bringing it to you, along with his precious witness as a Pastor of the Church who for years has worked with me for dialogue with the non-Christian religions. I address a cordial greeting to dear *Chiara Lubich*, Foundress and President of the Focolari Movement, as well as to the priests and leaders who have accompanied her.

Dear young friends, you were longing to involve the Pope in this event that is so dear to your hearts. As you know, precisely at the time of your Congress, I will be away from Rome on my Pastoral Visit to Azerbaijan and Bulgaria. This keeps me from meeting you, but not from being spiritually close to you! I am sure that with your prayer and affection, you too will accompany and support me on my Apostolic Visit.

2. You, "Young people for unity", understand well why every now and then I leave my See to visit distant Churches and countries. This is part of my service as the Successor of the Apostle Peter mandated by Christ to *preserve and encourage the unity* of the entire People of God. All Bishops must serve unity, but the Bishop of Rome serves it with a special and greater responsibility. Similarly, all young Christians are "for unity", but you, members of the Focolari Movement, are for unity in a special way!

Dear friends, the Spirit moves us spiritually; the Spirit unites us. It is the Holy Spirit of God who in

a mysterious way impels the Church towards deeper communion with God. He does so not as an *Absolute* who subdues and dominates everything, but as *Love* who gives, makes live and sanctifies everything.

3. Where does this marvellous "*theo-logia*" come from, this teaching on God? It comes from *Jesus*, the Christ, the Son of God made man and born of the Virgin Mary. Jesus reveals the Father, the image of the invisible mystery, the "face" of God in a man like us, the faithful "witness" of his love. That is why he came down to earth, devoted himself to preaching the Kingdom of Heaven and inaugurated it with signs and miracles, healing those who were prisoners of evil (cf. Acts 10,38). That is why he chose to give himself up to death, leaving us in the Last Supper the testament of his Sacrifice. This is why the Father raised him from the dead and placed him at his right hand, making him Lord of the world and of history. In Jesus' name, salvation is offered and proclaimed to men and women of every tongue, people and nation.

Yes, Jesus is the Saviour of the whole world. He is the *Prince of Peace*. Indeed, as the Apostle Paul said, "he is our peace" (Eph 2,14) because he has pulled down the wall of the hostility that separates persons and peoples. Jesus is *our hope*, the hope of all human kind who in every generation are called *to build peace in justice, truth and freedom*.

4. Dear young men and women, Christ is calling you to be heralds and witnesses of this splendid truth. He calls you to be *apostles of his peace*. Build peace *in all the situations* where you live your daily life: in your family, at school, with friends, in sports and in free time. Always be ready to listen, to dialogue, to understand. Be able to combine courage and gentleness, humility and tenacity in doing good. Learn from the divine Teacher that truth is not proclaimed with violence, but with the force of truth. At the school of the Gospel, keep justice and forgiveness together because true peace is the fruit of both. Moved by the Spirit of Jesus, love those who do not love you, and do good to those who do not love the good, so that the Kingdom of God that "is justice, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom 14,17) may grow in the world. In this way, dear friends, you will be true builders of unity and peace.

5. Dear young men and women, be apostles of peace! I would like to repeat to you what I said in Assisi on 24 January last, on the occasion of the [World Day of Prayer for Peace](#): "Young people of the third millennium, young Christians, young people of every religion, I ask you to be, like Francis of Assisi, gentle and courageous 'guardians' of true peace, based on justice and forgiveness, truth and mercy! Go forward into the future holding high the lamp of peace. The world has need of its light!" (n. 7). This is how the Pope wants you, because this is how Jesus wants you. Do not be afraid to give yourselves totally to the Lord.

May *Blessed Mary* help you; she loves every individual disciple of Jesus as a child of her own. Love her, dear young people, as your own Mother, and always let her guide you on your journey through life. I gladly accompany you with great affection and send you a special heartfelt Blessing.

From the Vatican, 18 May 2002.

JOHN PAUL II

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