



The Holy See

PASTORAL VISIT TO VIGEVANO AND PAVIA (ITALY)

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO YOUTH OF THE DIOCESE OF PAVIA

Cathedral Square, Pavia
Saturday, 21 April 2007

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

After travelling to Vigevano this afternoon, I am now here with you in Pavia, in this square with the majestic and imposing 15th-century Cathedral that serves as its background. The mortal remains of St Syrus, the first Bishop between the third and fourth centuries, were for centuries jealously guarded in this church, as in a casket; for the moment, however, these relics are temporarily housed in the Church of Our Lady of Carmel. I thank you all for meeting me and for listening to me with deep warmth.

At this first meeting, I would like to greet Madam Mayor and Minister Mastella, to whom I am grateful for their cordial words. I also greet the other civil Authorities present.

I wish to address a special greeting to Bishop Giovanni Giudici, Pastor of the Diocese, and with him, I greet the priests, Religious and all who are actively dedicated to pastoral work.

I want to express a particularly affectionate greeting especially to you, dear young people, who have gathered here in such large numbers for my first contact with your Diocese. You represent its hope and its future: for this reason I am glad to begin my first Visit precisely with you. I am grateful that so many of you are present.

I come to you this evening to renew a proclamation which is ever young and to entrust to you a message which, when it is accepted, changes, renews and fills one's life. In this Easter Season,

the Church proclaims this message with special joy: today too, the Risen Christ is alive among us!

Dear young people, how many of your peers have encountered him and have become his friends; they followed him faithfully and witnessed to his love with their own lives!

So do not be afraid to give your life to Christ: he never disappoints our expectations because he knows what is in our hearts. In following him faithfully, it will not be difficult for you to find the answer to the questions you bear in your heart: "What should I do? What task does life have in store for me?".

The Church, which needs your commitment, especially if she is to take the Gospel proclamation to your peers, supports you on the path of the knowledge of faith and of love for God and for your brothers and sisters.

Society, which in our time is marked by innumerable social changes, awaits your contribution in order to build a common coexistence that is less selfish and more supportive, truly inspired by the great ideals of justice, freedom and peace.

This is your mission, dear young friends! Let us work for justice, for peace, for solidarity, for true freedom.

May the Risen Christ, and together with him, the Virgin Mary, his Mother and our Mother, accompany you. With her example and her constant intercession, may Our Lady help you not to be downhearted in moments of failure, and to trust always in the Lord.

Once again, I warmly thank you for your presence and I bless you all with affection. Good night and good-bye until tomorrow!

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