



The Holy See

JOHN PAUL II

ANGELUS

*Les Combes, Valle d'Aosta, Italy
Sunday, 11 July 2004*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

1. I greet with affection all of you who have come to Les Combes to share with me in our customary Sunday gathering at the *Angelus*. I warmly thank the Mayor of Introd and those who work with him for their courteous welcome, as well as the regional and provincial Authorities and all those who are ensuring that during these days my collaborators and I enjoy a peaceful stay among the charming mountains of the Valle d'Aosta.

I offer a special greeting and cordial thanks to Bishop Giuseppe Anfossi of Aosta and to the entire ecclesial community of the *Vallée*. I am thinking with special affection of the sick and of those who are facing great difficulties and hardship.

I greet the Cardinal Archbishop of Turin and my brother Bishops, and thank them for their presence.

2. In this calm oasis, before the wonderful display of nature, it is easy to feel the benefits of *silence*, a quality that is becoming rarer and rarer today. The many opportunities modern society affords for relations and information sometimes run the risk of leaving no room for recollection, even to the point of jeopardising a person's ability to *reflect* and *pray*. Actually, it is only *in silence* that human beings can *hear in their inmost being the voice of God* which truly *sets them free*. And holidays can help people rediscover and cultivate this indispensable inner dimension of human life.

3. A perfect example of listening to God, who speaks to the human heart, is undoubtedly Mary Most Holy. Let us turn to her, thinking of the Marian shrines in the Valle d'Aosta and the images of the Virgin that we come across on the roads and along the paths. I bless in particular the statue of the "Madonnina del Gran Paradiso", restored 50 years after it was set on the summit of the majestic mountain of that name. May Mary, whom we will be celebrating in a few days as Our Lady of Mount Carmel, help us to perceive a reflection of divine glory in the beauty of creation and encourage us to strive with all our might for the spiritual peaks of holiness.

At the end of the prayer of the Angelus, the Pope greeted groups in Italian, French and Polish. He said:

I would now like to say a special word of thanks to the Salesian community of Les Combes. I extend my greeting to the Salesians of Lombriasco, Turin, who are with us here today. I cordially greet the French-speaking people present this morning for the prayer of the *Angelus*, in particular the Religious of Saint-Benoît Abbey in Port-Valais. I wish you all a good summer season. With my Apostolic Blessing.

I greet all the pilgrims present, and in particular, the Sisters from Italy, Madagascar and Côte d'Ivoire who will be taking part in the coming days in an international meeting of the Italian Federation of St Joseph. I also greet the "Famille nouvelle" Movement from Italy and other countries.

Lastly I greet the Poles present here, but from this extraordinarily beautiful place, located at the foot of the Mont Blanc, I address a special greeting to the mountains of my youth: Mount Tatra, the Beskid and Bieszczady Mountains, and all their inhabitants. God bless all my compatriots!

I wish you all a good Sunday and happy holidays!

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