



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO THE PHILIPPINES,
PAPUA NEW GUINEA, AUSTRALIA AND SRI LANKA

10th WORLD YOUTH DAY

SOLEMN EUCHARISTIC CONCELEBRATION

HOMILY OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II

*Rizal Park, Manila
Sunday 15 January 1995*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

1. We are celebrating the Mass of the Santo Niño of Cebu, the Child Jesus whose birth at Bethlehem the Church has just commemorated at Christmas. *Bethlehem* signifies *the beginning on earth of the mission which the Son received from the Father*, the mission which is at the heart of our reflections during this Tenth World Youth Day. In today's liturgy we find a magnificent commentary on the theme of the World Youth Day: *"As the Father sent me, so am I sending you"*.

Isaiah says: "For there is a child born for us, a son given to us: and dominion is laid on his shoulders" (Is. 9: 5). That Child came from the Father as the Prince of Peace, and his coming brought light into the world (Cf. Jn. 1: 5). The Prophet goes on: "The people that walked in darkness has seen a great light: on those who live in a land of deep shadow, a light has shone. You have made their gladness greater, you have made their joy increase" (Is. 9: 1-2). The happy event which the Prophet foretold took place at Bethlehem, the Christmas event which Christians everywhere celebrate with great joy: in Rome, in the Philippines and in all the countries of Asia and throughout the rest of the world.

Dear brothers and sisters of the Church in the Philippines, dear young people of the Tenth World

Youth Day all gathered here from different peoples, and languages, and cultures, and continents, and local Churches: What is the deepest joy of our common joy? *The deepest source of our joy is the fact that the Father sent the Son to save the world.* The Son takes upon himself the weight of the sins of humanity, and in this way redeems us and guides us on the path that leads to union with the Most Blessed Trinity with God. This is the deepest source of our joy, of the joy of all of us, and also the joy of myself. It is my joy and it is your joy.

2. When we repeat in the Responsorial Psalm: "*Here I am Lord, send me*", we hear a distant echo of what the Eternal Son said to the Father on coming into the world: "I have come to do your will, O God" (Heb. 10: 7). Here I am, Father, send me. He has come to do the will of the Father. The Father so loved the world that he gave his only Son for man's salvation (Cf. Jn. 3: 16). In turn, the Son so loved the Father that he made his own the Father's love for sinful and needy humanity. In this eternal *dialogue between the Father and the Son*, the Son declared his readiness to come into the world to achieve through his Passion and Death the redemption of mankind.

Today's Gospel is a commentary on how Jesus lived that Messianic mission. It shows us that when Jesus was twelve years old so you are older a little, perhaps he was already aware of his destiny. Tired after the long search for her Son, Mary said to him: "My child, why have you done this to us? See how worried your father and I have been looking for you". And he replied: "Why were you looking for me? *Did you not know that I must be busy with my Father's affairs?*" (Lk. 2: 48-49) This awareness deepened and grew in Jesus with the years, until it burst forth in all its strength when he began his public preaching. *The Father's power at work in him* was then gradually revealed in his words and works. It was revealed in a definitive way when he gave himself completely to the Father on the Cross. In Gethsemane, the night before his Passion, Jesus renewed his obedience: "Father, if it is your will, take this cup from me, yet not my will but yours be done" (Ibid. 22: 42). He remained faithful to what he had said at twelve years of age: "*I must be busy with my Father's affairs. I must do his will*". You have more than 12 years and you could understand that better. And you are understanding that better, for you are singing.

3. "*Here I am Lord, send me*". Here I am, here, in the Philippines, and everywhere! With our gaze fixed on Christ we repeat this verse of the Responsorial Psalm as *the answer of the Tenth World Youth Day* to what the Lord said to the Apostles but now says to everyone: "*As the Father sent me, so am I sending you*" (Jn. 20: 21) to the Apostles and to you the same because these words of Christ have become not just *the theme* but also *the guiding force* of this magnificent gathering here in Manila. After last evening's meditation and Vigil, this Eucharistic Sacrifice "consecrates" our response to the Lord: in eucharistic union with him, *all together we reply: "Send me!"*.

What does this mean? It means that *we are ready to do our part in the Lord's mission. Every Christian shares in the mission of Christ* in a unique and personal way. Bishops, priests and deacons share in Christ's mission through the ordained ministry. Men and women Religious share in it through the spousal love manifested in the spirit of the evangelical counsels of chastity,

poverty and obedience. The Christian laity share in Christ's mission: the fathers and mothers of families, old people, young people and children; simple people and those who are highly educated; people who till the soil, factory workers, engineers, technicians, doctors, nurses and healthcare personnel. Christ's mission is shared by teachers, by men and women in the legal professions, and those who serve in public life. Writers, people who work in the theater and cinema and the media, artists, musicians, sculptors and painters – all have a part in this mission, part in the messianic mission of Jesus Christ. In this mission there is a role for university professors, scientists, specialists in every field, and people in the world of culture. In Christ's mission a part belongs to you, the citizens of the Philippines and people of the Far East: Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Vietnamese, Indians; Christians from Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific; Christians from the Middle East, Europe and Africa, the Americas. Every baptized person has a part in Christ's mission, *in the Church and through the Church*. And this participation in Christ's mission constitutes the Church. That is the Church: a living participation in Christ's mission! Do you all understand that?

4. On the four-hundredth anniversary of its ecclesiastical independence and the setting up of its own hierarchical structure, *the Church in the Philippines is called to a profound renewal*. The direction of this renewal has already been indicated in the *Second Plenary Council of the Philippines* held in 1991. That Synod committed the Filipino Catholic community to *look more fully to Christ* and to find in him its pattern and its inspiration. The Synod exhorted the laity to *play a fuller role in the Church's elevating and liberating service to the human family*. The Final Document says: "All the lay faithful are called to heal and transform society, to prepare the temporal order for the final establishment of the Kingdom of God" (Second Plenary Council of the Philippines, *Council Document*, 435).

That is for you, for the young people of the Philippines, young Filipinos. And that is also for all of us, if a part is doing something of the Church, the whole Church participates. It is also for us, for me, the Bishop of Rome, for European Bishops, for African Bishops, American Bishops and for the great pilgrimage of youth from other countries and other continents. That is for us! It is not a private affair of the Filipino Church. It is our common affair. We are all involved in what a part of the Church, a local Church, is doing, is undertaking. *Res nostra agitur*. Do you understand Latin?

5. Within this commitment of the whole People of God, *what is the role of young people in continuing the Messianic mission of Christ?* What is your part, your role? We have already meditated on this during the World Youth Day and especially last night at the Vigil. Somebody could say, "They danced, they sang, but they meditated!". It was a creative meditation of the sending they received from Christ. Meditation can also be done through dancing and through singing, through entertainment. And it was a very entertaining meditation yesterday. Finally after this meditation, I was able to sleep. And now after sleep I will add one specific challenge and appeal, which involves the healing of a source of immense frustration and suffering in many families all over the world. Parents and older people sometimes feel that they *have lost contact*

with you, and they are upset, just as Mary and Joseph felt anguish when they realized that Jesus had stayed behind in Jerusalem. Many elderly parents feel abandoned because of us. Is it true, or no? It should not be true! It should be otherwise! But sometimes it is true. Sometimes you are very critical of the world of adults (and I was also like you) and sometimes they are very critical of you (that is also true). Sometimes you are very critical of the world of adults, and sometimes they are very critical of you. This is not something new, and it is not always without a real basis in life. But always remember that you owe your life and upbringing to your parents, remember that: what your debt is to your parents and the Fourth Commandment expresses in a concise way the demands of justice towards them (Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 2215). In most cases they have provided for your education at the cost of personal sacrifice. Thanks to them you have been introduced into the cultural and social heritage of your community and country, your homeland. Generally speaking, your parents have been your first teachers in the faith. Parents therefore have a right to expect from their sons and daughters the mature fruits of their efforts, just as children and young people have the right to expect from their parents the love and care which leads to a healthy development. All that is the Fourth Commandment. The Fourth Commandment is very rich. I suggest that you meditate about the Fourth Commandment of the Decalogue of God. I am asking you to *build bridges of dialogue and communication with your parents*. No splendid isolation! Communication! Love! Be a healthy influence on society to help to break down the barriers which have been raised between generations! No barriers! No barriers! Communion between generations, between parents and sons and daughters. Communion!

In this atmosphere, Jesus can say I send you! It begins in the family home where Jesus says first, "I send you". And to the parents he says, "I send your son. I send your daughter. I say to them, 'Follow me!'". All that requires the right atmosphere, complete image of the social life in the Philippines and everywhere. And it is also this spiritual environment in which our sending is realized. "As the Father sent me", says Christ, "I am sending you".

How many young people think they are free because they have thrown off every restraint and every principle of responsibility? How many of them think that because certain forms of behavior are socially accepted they are therefore morally right? They abuse the beautiful gift of sexuality; they abuse drink and drugs, thinking that such behavior is all right because certain sectors of society tolerate it. Objective moral norms are abandoned under peer pressure and under the pervasive influence of trends and fashions publicized by the media. Millions of young people the world over are falling into subtle but real forms of moral slavery. And you understand what Jesus means when he says, "I send you to confront this situation, among your brothers and sisters, other young people".

6. Beloved ones, sisters and brothers: build your lives on *the one model that will not deceive you!* I invite you to open the Gospel and discover that Jesus Christ wants to be your "friend" (Cf. Jn. 15: 14). He wants to be your "companion" at every stage on the road of life (Cf. Lk. 24: 13-35). He wants to be the "way", your path through the anxieties, doubts, hopes and dreams of happiness

(Cf. Jn. 14: 6). He is the "truth" that gives meaning to your efforts and your struggles. He wants to give you "life", as he gave new life to the young man of Nain (Cf. Lk. 7: 11-17), and gave a whole new future to Zacchaeus who was dead in spirit through ambition and greed (Cf. *ibid.* 19: 1-10). He is your "resurrection", your victory over sin and death, the fulfilment of your desire to live forever (Cf. Jn. 11: 25). Because of this he will be your "joy", the "rock" on which your weakness will be turned into strength and optimism. He is our salvation, our hope and happiness and peace.

Christ! Christ! Christ! I speak without abbreviation. Worse! I am adding something.

When Christ becomes all of this for you, the world and the Church will have solid reasons for *hope for the future*. For on you will depend the Third Millennium, which sometimes appears as a marvellous new epoch for humanity but which also raises not a few fears and anxieties. I say this as one who has lived through a large portion of the twentieth century which is now coming to an end. In this century many sad and destructive things have happened, but at the same time we have experienced so many good things which sustain our hope and optimism. The future depends on your maturity! The Church looks to the future with confidence when she hears from your lips the same answer that Jesus gave Mary and Joseph when they found him in the Temple: "Did you not know that I must be busy with my Father's affairs?" (Lk. 2: 49). He answered your answer, the same! He was younger, you're older.

7. Dear young people: the Tenth World Youth Day is coming to a close. It is time to commit yourselves more fully to following Christ in the fulfilment of his saving mission. Every form of the apostolate and every kind of service must have its source in Christ. When he says: "*As the Father sent me, so am I sending you*" (Jn. 20: 21), he also makes you capable of this mission. In a sense *he shares himself with you*. This is precisely what Saint Paul writes about: *God chose us in Christ* before the world began, to be holy and blameless in his sight, to be full of love; he likewise predestined us through Christ Jesus to be his adopted sons and daughters (Cf. Eph. 1: 4-5). It is precisely through the *grace of being the adopted children of God that we are capable of taking up the mission entrusted to us by Christ*. We must leave Luneta Park with *a more confident awareness of this extraordinary fact!*

I see if you applaud, it is still reason to be applauded. That is a good sign that you are thinking, reflecting. And I admire your reflection. I admire the grace of our Lord dwelling in your reflection, in your applauding also. So the Pope not only speaks. He is having a dialogue. He speaks and he hears, he listens and you are speaking. And what you speak is perhaps more important. But you speak by applauding!

We have today a great delay. But this day should not finish. It should continue for ever and ever. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever" (Heb. 13: 8). If you take up his cause, and the mission which he gives you, then the whole human family, and the Church in every part of the world, can look to the Third Millennium with hope and trust. Dear young people of the Philippines,

of Asia, of the Far East and of the entire world: be a sign of hope for the Church, for your countries and for all humanity! Be *a sign of hope!* Like the "*great light*"... May your light spread out from Manila to the farthest corners of the world. Like the "great light" which shone in the night at Bethlehem. *Be sons and daughters of the Light!*

Yesterday I said, "At the beginning, more and more shining points". And today all are shining! Very nice, very nice people, young people!

Before, Spanish was also spoken in the Philippines. Tomorrow, America. But of mostly Filipino language, not American. A common language, a Christian language.

8. Dear People of God in the Philippines, go forth in the power of the Holy Spirit to renew the face of the earth – your own world first, your families, your communities and the nation to which you belong and which you love; and the wider world of Asia, towards which the Church in the Philippines has a special responsibility before the Lord; you Filipino young people have a special responsibility before the Lord for Asia. And all of you, not only the Filipino people (Mubuhay!), have the same responsibility before the Lord and the world beyond, working through faith for the renewal of God's whole creation. That is your responsibility, your calling, everywhere, in Europe, in Africa, in both Americas, in Australia, everywhere! (Cf. Second Plenary Council of the Philippines, *Acts and Decrees*, n. 7)

May God who began this work in you – four hundred years ago for others, many centuries ago, some more, some less – bring it to completion in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ! (Cf. Phil. 1: 6) That is my conclusion and my cordial wish for all of you – conclusion in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ! Jesus Christ! Jesus Christ! Amen!