



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II TO YOUTH PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

Friday, 7 December 1984

My dear Friends, my dear Young People,

1. My first words to you at this International Youth Symposium for Peace, here at the Vatican, are words of welcome and gratitude. Your presence here, young people from many different countries, expresses your desire to commit your lives to creating a new future of fraternity and solidarity among all the peoples of the earth. That is why I welcome you most warmly and thank you for coming, many of you from great distances, to share your hopes and your thoughts with me. You are a sign of hope in the midst of a world threatened by war and every other form of violence.

It was in Japan that this Symposium arranged in view of the International Youth Year, was first initiated and organized. I have many memories at this moment of my visit in 1981 to that country. In particular, I remember vividly my visit to the Peace Memorial at Hiroshima. That monument, a symbol of the determination to work for peace, is an abiding and forceful expression of hope. As I said on that occasion: "To remember the past is to commit oneself to the future. To remember Hiroshima is to abhor nuclear war. To remember Hiroshima is to commit oneself to peace".

2. My dear friends, I appeal to you today and to young people throughout the world during the coming International Youth Year to make those words become flesh and blood in your own lives: *to remember the past is to commit oneself to the future*. For each of you this must mean committing yourself irrevocably to become builders of peace and brotherhood. Whatever the obstacles, however long and arduous the road that stretches before you, you must not let anything deter you from reaching across the barriers of nation and race and culture to be united with all your brothers and sisters and to go forward to build an international order of peace that rests on the pillars of truth and justice, freedom and love.

It is to encourage just such a programme that I have chosen for the World Day of Peace, January 1, 1985, the theme: "Peace and Youth Go Forward Together". In these days of your youth make it your ideal to be builders of peace, to be peacemakers, and never let your hope grow dim. I shall be returning to this theme more fully in relation to the World Day of Peace itself, but for the moment I should like to reflect with you on at least a few of the very important points that have

been touched upon in the presentations made to us this morning by the youth representatives from different countries.

3. For instance, it was said by several of the representatives that there can be no peace in the world if we do not first seek peace within ourselves. These are wise words. We cannot give what we do not have. Those who believe in God are aware that we must be personally reconciled with God and with our brothers and sisters if we wish to bring reconciliation to the world around us. One of you quoted from a saint who is loved by Christians and non-Christians alike, Francis of Assisi, and suggested that we use his prayer: "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred let me sow love. Where there is injury pardon". If that is our prayer, if that is what is truly in our hearts, we will indeed be instruments of true peace.

4. Another young representative told us of the resolution of the young people in his country. He said: "We resolve to respect all life as God's gift to us, to recognize all people as our brothers and sisters, to cooperate in our work with God's creative design, and to be peacemakers in the world in which we live". My dear young friends, if you succeed in being faithful to such a programme, each of you will truly be able to say, when your own life draws to a close, that it was not in vain. You will have made a valuable contribution to the history of humankind. It is a programme that includes a respect for the beauty of creation and for the environment in which we live and breathe, a respect that I know is especially valued in the cultural heritage of Japan. It is a programme that requires a moderate use of the world's resources for the good of all, a programme that makes respect for the rights of each of our brothers and sisters a basis on which lasting peace may be built.

In giapponese il Papa pronuncia le parole che diamo qui di seguito in una traduzione in italiano.

Sia lodato Gesù Cristo!

Desidero rivolgere un pensiero speciale a monsignor Hamao: a coloro che hanno cooperato alla realizzazione del Simposio per la pace e soprattutto ai giovani presenti.

La pace è una delle più grandi aspirazioni dell'uomo, perciò tutta la società deve contribuire ad essa, ma in modo particolare voi, giovani, che siete chiamati a costruire una società nella giustizia e nella pace.

Dilettissimi giovani giapponesi, non abbiate paura di impegnarvi totalmente per la pace.

Con questo augurio vi benedico di cuore.

Sia lodato Gesù Cristo!

5. Mi è caro fare allusione alle parole del rappresentante che ha parlato della croce. "Tutte le volte che vedo la croce - diceva - io vedo una chiamata a morire al proprio interesse, alla propria volontà, alla considerazione di sé; io vedo un appello alla pace". Per quelli di noi che sono cristiani è possibile trovare la certezza della riconciliazione con Dio e con i fratelli soltanto nell'amore disinteressato di Cristo che muore sulla croce: una morte che egli ha liberamente accettato per il bene di tutti gli uomini e le donne. Essa è la sorgente della nostra speranza e del nostro impegno per la pace. Ma il

messaggio della croce si estende a tutti, ai cristiani come ai non cristiani. Esso è pure un appello a mettere da parte i propri interessi, a guardare al di là di noi stessi, a essere uomini e donne che non vivono solo per se stessi, ma anche “per gli altri”. Se osserviamo con attenzione il mondo d’oggi, noteremo che è indubbiamente a simili persone che i giovani guardano come a modelli e a ideali per la loro vita, a persone che danno il loro tempo, la loro energia e la loro vita “per gli altri”. Questi sono gli ideali che anche voi dovete far vostri, se volete superare gli ostacoli, anche quelli apparentemente insormontabili, che si incontrano sul cammino della pace.

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