



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II TO THE JUBILEE PILGRIMAGE FROM SCANDINAVIA

Friday, 30 March 1984

Dear brothers and sisters,

"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (*Eph 1, 2*).

It is an immense joy for me to welcome you as pilgrims from Scandinavia. You have come representing the Church in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. You have come with your hopes and anxieties, and with the aspirations and joys of your Christian lives. You have come *to bear witness* in Rome *to your faith in Jesus Christ* the Son Of God and the Redeemer of the world.

In your home countries you have heard the call of the Church: "Open the Doors to the Redeemer". This call has struck your hearts and you have felt the need *to celebrate*, in union with the universal Church, *the mystery of the Redemption*. Your presence in Rome at this time renders homage to the redeeming Blood of Christ and to the reconciliation brought about by the shedding of this Blood. You are here to proclaim in and with the Church that Christ has freed us from sin and death. In the words of the Apostle Paul: "It is in Christ and through his blood that we have been redeemed and our sins forgiven, so immeasurably generous is God's favour to us" (*Eph 1, 7*). Because of the Redemption you are called to be a holy people, to live in Christ Jesus for the glory of the Father. Through the redeeming act of his Son - the Paschal Mystery of Jesus - God takes possession of you as his own.

And today you are in a position *to enter into the mystery of the Redemption* through the conversion that God offers you, the opening of your hearts to him. In this context the Church presents to you the great treasure of grace: *the Sacrament of Penance*, whereby in an individual and personal encounter with the Redeemer you receive the outpouring of his pardon, his mercy

and his love. And then the Church invites you to the fullness of union with God in *the Eucharist*, in which the mystery of the Redemption is supremely actuated in your lives. The Church asks you, dear brothers and sisters, to receive these sacraments. Penance and the Eucharist are involved in conversion, in the opening of the doors of your hearts to the Redeemer.

There is yet another aspect of the Redemption that I would like to emphasize today. Jesus died, Saint John tells us, "to gather into one the dispersed children of God" (*Jo* 11, 52). The Redemption of Jesus is intimately related to *the unity of the Church* and requires the full unity in faith and love of all Christ's followers. As Catholics in Scandinavia you are a small flock among other Christian brethren. In your daily lives you experience the need for perfect Christian unity. This unity is a gift of God and must be humbly sought in prayer. Through that conversion which is the object of your pilgrimage to Rome, you will be able to be faithful to sustained prayer for Christian unity. Through the holiness of your own lives you will actually contribute to this cause. This aspect too is contained in the Church's call: "Open the Doors to the Redeemer".

As you return to your homes I ask you to take my greetings and blessing to your families and friends, especially to the sick and suffering. The Pope is close to the Bishops, priests, religious and laity of Scandinavia. Be assured of my prayers for you all. "My love be with you all in Christ Jesus" (*1 Cor* 16, 23).

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