



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC PILGRIMAGE TO INDIA

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE YOUTH IN THE PARK OF SHIVAJI

Bombay (India)

Monday, 10 February 1986

Dear Friends, dear young people,

1. I am very pleased that my meeting with you – the youth of India – comes at this important moment, as I am about to conclude my visit to your country. I am happy to be with you, to talk to you, to listen to you and to be assembled with you in the name of Jesus. We are united with one another in him; we are one in his love. Together we are experiencing his presence, because he is here in our midst, just as he promised: "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them".

For almost two thousand years the person and teaching of Jesus have been honoured in this land. As your President recently said here in Bombay: "Christianity came to India even before it was preached in Rome". Moreover, in you who believe in him, Jesus himself has become Indian. And so today it is to this Jesus that we look to find our inspiration. In his teaching we discover the message we are looking for. And he, Jesus, tells us how to live, because he tells us why we are alive. Jesus explains to us our origin, our life, our destiny. We have been created by God, and in Jesus we are children of God; we have come forth from God's love. We are here to know God, to love him and to serve him – to discover, embrace and minister to him in our neighbour. And our destiny is to live with him for ever. In his Gospel Jesus explains these truths to us and, in the light of these truths, he explains what is expected of us in life. He explains to us that we must serve all our brothers and sisters, we must serve the world.

In a word, Jesus explains us to ourselves. He does this by explaining to us our relationship with God and with the world. He can do this because he understands us and he understands God: he is the Son of Man and at the same time he is the Son of God – the Son of God made man. By his teaching, his grace and the power of his word, Jesus enables us to live upright lives, to live in such

a way as to gain eternal life. Saint John proclaims to us God's plan: "God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who has not the Son of God has not life" .

2. But in order to keep this life, we must remain united with Christ. He explains to us that all life comes from himself; we live only because of him: "I am the vine, you are the branches... If a man does not abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers" . Jesus also explains to us that in order to live in God's love we must love our neighbour: "This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you" .

To belong to Christ and to keep his commandment of love means that we are called to serve our neighbour, to make our contribution to society, and to work for the good of our country and the whole world.

Saint John urges us to be consistent in our lives. He puts it very clearly and simply: We have been loved by God and must therefore love our neighbour in return. His words are very forceful: "If any one says, 'I love God', and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen" .

3. These principles, dear young people, challenge you in your whole attitude towards life: they affect what you do at home, the way you treat your fellow men, the way you decide to contribute to the world. They confirm the fact that you cannot live your life in isolation!

The Church supports you as you face the challenges that are yours as young people in India. She wants to reflect with you on what is involved, on what is expected of you, on how you can serve best.

The Church will help you to identify the problems in the world by clarifying the purpose of life, by insisting on the dignity of man, by sharing with you her understanding of humanity. She will stand by you and encourage you at every turn. But above all she offers you Christ. She will urge you to stay united with him, to remain in his love, because in him you will discover not only the source of life but also a model of authentic human living.

4. The Church will offer you the Sacraments to sustain you and heal you and give you strength. In the Eucharist she will transmit to you the life of Christ. Through Penance she will put you in contact with the compassionate and forgiving Christ, and there will be many times, dear young people, when you will experience the need for mercy and be called upon to exercise it. The Church will explain to you everything that she has learned from Christ, beginning with the art of prayer, so that you may be in contact with Christ, in conversation with him, in union with him.

The Church will equip you to face serenely the successes and failures and aspirations of life, because she will transmit to you the life-giving and uplifting message of "Christ Jesus our hope" .

But the Church also asks something of you: she asks for your collaboration, your help in leading humanity to God. She asks you to bear witness to Christ. She asks you to serve your neighbour in the circumstances of your daily lives, here and now: in Bombay, in India, in 1986.

5. Here the challenge to you becomes specific. Each one of you is called to a specific service, and all together you are called to transform the world:

- by forgiveness and reconciliation when ill-treated by others in your individual and collective lives, knowing that to forgive is divine;
- by fraternal love and solidarity, working with all your brothers and sisters, because Jesus' commandment of love is universal;
- by promoting peace in working for justice, beginning with your own lives;
- by loving your country and working for the advancement of all your people;
- by remaining faithful to your national heritage and your community, yet realising that you belong to the universal Church and to the world community;
- by looking to Mary the Mother of Jesus to find an example of a life dedicated to generous service – open to God and intent on serving man;
- by giving of yourselves generously, like Mary, co-operating in God's plan for the world;
- by cultivating the virtues of simplicity, honesty and sincerity;
- by rejecting all discrimination based on race, religion, sex, social condition or language groups.

We are all brothers and sisters, children of the same Father. Our riches consist not in the multiplicity of our possessions but in the fewness of our wants – in the spiritual freedom that accompanies the right attitude towards created things. Dear young people: you cannot find happiness by grasping for material things or by being doped in on yourselves. There is no place for apathy or indifference in your lives. The Lord wishes to use your enthusiasm, ingenuity and idealism for the benefit of your neighbours, India and the world.

The dynamism of your youth must be channelled into solving the questions facing society today, into working for unity, into doing your daily work as a contribution to building a better world. You must combat inertia and persevere in the face of difficulties. You are called to love what is best in your Indian way of life.

Every day you must open your hearts to the action of the Holy Spirit, asking him to show you truth in all its fullness. And it is on the basis of truth – the truth of your being, the truth about man, the truth about humanity – that you must build society. The Church will lead you to the truth about man, but you yourselves must embrace it and apply it.

6. The Church does not claim to have easy and ready-made solutions to all the particular problems that face humanity. The Second Vatican Council made this clear by stating: "The Church guards the heritage of God's word and draws from it religious and moral principles, without always having at hand the solution to particular problems" . At the same time the Church knows that she has been sent into the world with the message of Christ and that she is in a position to help man resolve basic problems. In regard to these difficulties the Council put it this way: "Enlightened by God's revelation, the Church is able to give a response" .

And the youth of India are called to apply the solid principles of faith to the reality of today's society.

For those of you who are Christians, it means applying the message of Christ to every part of life.

For all of you, whether Christians or not, it means working together in fraternal love for integral human development in India today, showing special concern for the poor and the downtrodden.

7. You do well to listen carefully to the sages of your land as they speak to you about the great power of truth that was so much a part of their own lives and that cannot help but be an inspiration to you all. For you as for them, it will involve understanding and patience, non-violence, endurance and suffering. But truth is power, the only kind of power that can change the world, and when combined with love it is a power that can totally transform the world.

The final outcome of truth is triumph and liberation. Jesus assures us explicitly: "You will know the truth and the truth will make you free". Go forward, young people of India, with the truth of God. It is liberating, uplifting and invincible. Yes, the truth of God is invincible!

8. And with you, dear young people of India, my pilgrimage to your great land comes to an end. But the values that I have seen are imperishable and will never come to an end. And India herself must go forward to fulfil, within the comity of nations, her destiny of service to humanity.

Dear people of all India: your warmth and hospitality will remain in my heart for all the days to come. I am deeply grateful to you all.

I renew the expression of my special appreciation to His Excellency the President of India and to the Prime Minister and Government. To all the religious and civic leaders who have done so much to make this pilgrimage to India possible and to all who have worked so hard for its success, I say,

from the depths of my heart, "thank you". Upon all the people of India I invoke God's blessings of peace and justice, of love and truth.

Jai Hind!

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