



The Holy See

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

10th WORLD YOUTH DAY

VIDEO MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II TO YOUTH TAKING PART IN THE WAY OF THE CROSS

Manila

Friday, 13 January 1995

"Unless I go the Spirit will not come to you" (Jn.16:7).

Dear young people,

1. These words of Jesus at the Last Supper speak to us of his return to the Father. As you follow the *Way of the Cross in Luneta Park and through the streets of Manila*, you will meditate on what this "going back to the Father" means.

Each one of us is personally involved. The mystery of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ affects the whole of human history, and reaches down to every human being, with the power to bring the newness of life which we all desire when we yearn for fulfilment and happiness.

2. In the inscrutable mystery of God's design, "*the Word became flesh and dwelt among us*" (Jn.1:14). He took a body like ours, was born of the Virgin Mary... and through his death on the Cross he takes us – wayward and sinful humanity – back to the Father, so that we may live in the certain hope of the Resurrection. The manner of his going also was a part of the Father's plan. We read in the Gospel: "The soldiers... threw a scarlet military cloak about him. Weaving a crown out of thorns, they placed it on his head... And kneeling before him, they mocked him... and when they had mocked him... they led him off to be crucified" (Mt. 27:27-31).

3. The executioners stand for everyone who does evil in the sight of God. At times it even seems

that evil is taking over, and that people are helpless to stop it. Young people ask *what can be done in the face of so much suffering, so much injustice, so much violence and death?*

We begin to see the answer when we look at the other people in this drama.

The Gospels speak of a man named Simon whom "they pressed into service to carry his cross" (Mt. 27:32) . And the weeping women who followed him all the way to the place of crucifixion (cf. Mt. 27:55 et al.). Tradition refers to a woman named Veronica who wiped the face of Jesus with a towel. The Gospel of Saint John tells us that "*standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala*", as well as "*the disciple whom he loved*" (Jn.19:25-26).

The faithful ones did not abandon the Son of God hidden in the suffering Son of Man.

For us too, Jesus on the Cross becomes *the ultimate test of our faith and the judgement of God on our behavior.*

4. The Tenth World Youth Day is holding *a day of solidarity with the suffering people of Rwanda*. Overcome by the terrible evil that has borne down on them, our Rwandan brothers and sisters need your material aid, but they also need encouragement *in restoring the sense of their dignity as sons and daughters of the living God*. May they be heartened to know that you are making sacrifices for them, sacrifices which signify your real concern for brothers and sisters who are far away, but not forgotten.

Each one of you is being challenged to listen to the words of the Lord: "whoever wishes to be my follower must deny his very self, *take up his cross each day and follow in my steps*" (Lk . 9:23): the cross of rejecting the ways of thinking which contradict the teachings of Jesus; the cross of rejecting desires and behavior which are not worthy of the followers of Christ. You are being invited to allow the transforming grace which flows from the Cross of Christ to enter your lives – especially through the reception of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. There are many priests with you who will act as instruments of the Lord's loving forgiveness in this Sacrament.

5. Lord Jesus Christ: At the Last Supper you said: "Unless I go the Spirit will not come to you" (Jn.16.7). *Send the Holy Spirit upon these young people, so that he may teach them to love your Cross and the cross which belongs to each one of them personally.*

Help them to follow closely in your footsteps along the Way that leads to Calvary, the Way that leads to the Resurrection, and beyond that to where you are "seated at the right hand of the Father".

From there, O Lord, *send the Holy Spirit into the hearts of the young people gathered in Manila for the Tenth World Youth Day!* May he help them to respond generously and fearlessly to your call: "*As the Father sent me, so am I sending you*" (Jn. 20:21). Do this, for the glory of God the Father. Amen.

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