



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS
POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO YOUTH OF MARSEILLES**

Friday, 11 April 1997

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the home of the Successors of Peter. I am pleased to receive you, young people from the Archdiocese of Marseilles, who have come to Rome with your Archbishop, Bernard Panafieu. I greet him fraternally and thank him for the words he has addressed to me on your behalf.

Marseilles has had her place in the Church for a long time. The Gospel was proclaimed in your region and bore many fruits, of which you are the heirs. Your Diocese has received and given much: the canonization of Bishop de Mazenod on 3 December 1995 reminds us of this. You, in turn, set out to seek the living sources of your faith. You have already been able to sense how the work of Sts Peter and Paul has marked this city of Rome. Two thousand years after their passing, it is not difficult to perceive the results of their preaching and to form an idea of what remains to be done so that "God may be everything to every one" (1 Cor 15:28).

The first Apostles heard Christ telling them "come and see" (Jn 1:39). You receive this call, which it is your duty to transmit to others.

Come, and you will see that I want to change your life so as to unite it more closely to mine!

Come, and you will see that your life is full of meaning, greatness and beauty, if you are able to offer it!

Come, and you will see that I am always with you along the way!

We have just celebrated the Lord's Resurrection. In Rome you are communing in faith with those who were the first witnesses of this Resurrection; you can see the people whom God continues to help grow. In the Archdiocese of Marseilles, the people need you. They need you to be faithful witnesses to the Gospel and to be able serenely "to account for the hope that is in you" (1 Pt 3:15), telling all those who want to give meaning to their life that the risen Christ is waiting for them.

The feast of Easter, as you know, precedes that of Pentecost by 50 days. The risen Christ sent the Holy Spirit to his Apostles so that they would proclaim the Good News "to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Those among you who are preparing for Confirmation are also waiting to receive the Spirit of Pentecost. He will make them stronger for bearing the witness Christ asks of them, and thus for taking their proper place in the Church.

Dear friends, I am pleased to see so many of you: be proud and happy to have received the grace of faith! Always be zealous in passing it on, because you are the salt of the earth and you have much to offer those you meet on your way. I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing to your Archbishop, to the priests and to all those who have accompanied you, to each one of you, to your parents, your brothers and sisters and to all the members of your families.

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