



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II TO THE DUTCH NATIONAL JUBILEE PILGRIMAGE

Tuesday, 7 November 2000

Your Eminences,

Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate,

Dear pilgrims from the Netherlands!

1. The intense programme that your community is following during this Holy Year has also included a visit to Rome, to cross together the threshold of the Jubilee Door. With affection I say to you: Welcome! I greet Cardinal Adrianus Simonis, President of the Netherlands Bishops' Conference, and I thank him for the kind expressions which he addressed to me on behalf of you all. I also greet Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, the prelates, priests and leaders who have accompanied this national pilgrimage.

In addressing them and each of you present, my heartfelt thoughts turn to your compatriots, to all who have joined us by radio and television, to those who could not take part in today's meeting, to those suffering in body and in spirit, to young people and to families, the cradle and sanctuary of life.

The Jubilee period is particularly rich with motives to examine your faith journey in a repentant spirit, to rediscover the great mercy of the heavenly Father and to take up your apostolic and missionary commitment with renewed enthusiasm. *"The faith goes forward!"* is the motto that guides the Great Jubilee in your land, reminding every person of his commitment to bear witness.

2. Bearing witness to Christ is a task that involves the Church and each member at every level. Throughout her glorious history, the Church in the Netherlands has known how to raise up from her ranks vast numbers of missionaries and apostles, who in every corner of the earth have proclaimed the Gospel and served humanity. How can we forget, among many others, the

splendid example of Sr Mary Adolphine Dierk and her sisters, martyred in China, whom I had the joy of canonizing on 1 October last?

Even today your compatriots working in the vast field *of the missions and human development* are numerous. They are a sign of blessing for you because they show the vitality and generosity of your faith journey. But they also urge and encourage you not to lessen the missionary fervour of your communities. There is no need to become discouraged in bearing witness to Christ and proclaiming his word of salvation, in the certainty that he is always with his Church, to the end of time (cf. Mt 28: 20). Even when a feeling of inadequacy before the vastness of the apostolic task may seize you, recall the words of the Apostle: "I can do all things in him who strengthens me" (Phil 4: 13).

God never ceases to call strong and generous souls and to invite them to work in the great harvest of his kingdom. In this regard, at the recent [World Youth Day](#) I said to the crowds of young people present: "If any of you, dear young men and women, hear the Lord's inner call to give yourselves completely to him in order to love him 'with an undivided heart' (cf. 1 Cor 7: 34), do not be held back by doubts or fears. Say 'yes' with courage and without reserve, trusting him who is faithful to his promises" (*L'Osservatore Romano* English edition, 23 August 2000, p. 2).

3. At that unforgettable event, many Dutch youth were also present. In welcoming the invitation of their Pastors, they wanted to experience the universality of the Church. To them, "watchmen of the morning at the dawn of the third millennium", I want to repeat: "If you are what you should be, you will set the whole world ablaze!" (ibid.).

I am grateful to the Dutch Catholic organizations which on that occasion supported the presence of young men and women from the Netherlands in Rome. They did the same on the occasion of the Jubilee for University Teachers, who at that celebration presented me with a book, the fruit of their reflections, "*In quest of humanity in a globalizing world*". I give them my heartfelt thanks.

It is important to deepen the communion between the Church in the Netherlands and the Successor of Peter and, through him, with the universal Church. For it is on the basis of unity that differences help to enliven and enrich the whole body of Christ. *Dialogue in charity and truth* should always characterize the way that individuals and communities relate among themselves and to the Church.

4. Dear friends, today you pass through the Holy Door to confirm your faith in Christ and to entrust yourselves to the life-giving power of his love. It is an act that countless numbers of your countrymen, from St Willibrord on, have made with joy and devotion down the ages. One proof of this is the nearby Church of Sts Michael and Magnus, commonly known as the Church of the Frisians. Be proud and worthy of the holiness that God has abundantly given to your community!

The Church that preserves the tombs of Sts Peter and Paul and of countless witnesses to the Lamb embraces you today with great joy and shows you Christ, the Holy Door to be passed through with trust. She shows you Mary, *Stella maris* and "Sweet Mother" of your noble people. May God, through her intercession, bring to completion the work that in these days he is accomplishing in you!

With these sentiments I bless you all.

At the end of the meeting the Holy Father said:

I know that now you will go on pilgrimage to St John Lateran, stopping at the sacred places of the city to meditate, with the guidance of your Bishops, on some fundamental aspects of Christian life. I accompany you with my prayers and bless you.

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