



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC VISIT TO TORONTO,
TO CIUDAD DE GUATEMALA AND TO CIUDAD DE MÉXICO

17th WORLD YOUTH DAY

EVENING VIGIL WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

OPENING GREETING
BY THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II

Toronto, Downsview Park, Saturday July 27, 2002

*Young people of the world, dear Friends,
Dear people of the Beatitudes!*

With affection in the Lord I greet you all! I am happy to be among you again, after the days you have spent in catechesis and reflection, meeting one another and celebrating. We are coming towards the final phase of your World Day, *the high point of which will be our Eucharistic celebration tomorrow.*

In you, gathered from the four corners of the world, the Church sees her future, and feels the call to the youthfulness with which the Holy Spirit always enriches her. The enthusiasm and joy that you are showing are a sure sign of your love for the Lord, and of your desire to serve him in the Church and in your brothers and sisters.

2. A few days ago, in Wadowice, my home town, the Third International Young People's Forum took place. It brought together Catholics, Greek-Catholics and Orthodox youth from Poland and Eastern Europe. Today, thousands of young people from all over Poland are there and are connected with us through a television link-up to celebrate this Prayer Vigil with us. Allow me to greet them in Polish:

I greet the Polish-speaking young people, so many of whom have come from our Homeland and from other countries throughout the world, and the thousands of young people from all of Poland and from the countries of Eastern Europe who have gathered in Wadowice to participate in this prayer vigil with us. To all of you I express the hope that these days will bear abundant fruits of generous fervour in holding fast to Jesus Christ and his Gospel.

Spanish

Dear Young Friends,

I thank you for your presence in Toronto, I embrace you wholeheartedly, and I always pray for you so that you will be now and always the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

Italian

With affection I greet the young Italian people present here and all those in Italy who have joined us by TV link-up. Together with the young people who live this Day all over the world, we want to hold the world in our embrace of faith and love, to proclaim our faith in Christ, faithful friend who enlightens everyone's journey.

3. During this evening's Vigil we shall welcome *the Cross of Christ*, the sign of God's love for humanity. *We shall praise the Risen Lord*, the light that shines in the darkness. *We shall pray in the words of the Psalms*, repeating the very words that Jesus used during his earthly life when he spoke to his Father. The Psalms are still the prayer of the Church today. Then *we shall listen to the word of the Lord*, a lamp for our steps, a light for our path (cf. *Ps 119:105*).

I invite you to be the voice of the young people of the whole world, to express their joys, their disappointments, their hopes. Look to Jesus, the living One, and repeat what the Apostles asked: "Lord, teach us how to pray". Prayer will be *the salt* that gives flavour to your lives, and leads you to him, humanity's *true light*.