



The Holy See

PASTORAL VISIT TO THE DIOCESE OF SAN MARINO-MONTEFELTRO

MEETING WITH THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE DIOCESE OF SAN MARINO-MONTEFELTRO

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

Piazza Vittorio Emanuele - Pennabilli

Sunday, 19 June 2011

(Video)

Dear Young People,

I am very glad to be here, among you and with you! I sense your joy and the enthusiasm that is characteristic of your age. I greet and thank your Pastor, Bishop Luigi Negri, for his cordial words of welcome, and your friend who has interpreted your thoughts and feelings and formulated several very serious and important questions.

I hope that in the course of my commentary the elements for finding answers to these questions will emerge. I greet with affection the priests, sisters and counsellors who share your journey of faith and friendship; as well, of course, as your parents who are filled with joy at seeing you grow strong in goodness.

Our meeting here in Pennabilli in front of this cathedral, the heart of the diocese, and in this square, makes us think of the many different meetings of Jesus which are recounted in the Gospels. Today I would like to recall the famous episode in which as the Lord was setting out, someone — a rich young man — ran up and kneeling before him asked this question: “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” (Mk 10:17).

Perhaps today we would not express ourselves this way, but the meaning of the question is exactly the same: what should I do, how should I live in order to live truly, to find life. We can therefore see in this question the broad and varied human experience that leads to the search for meaning, for the profound sense of life: how to live and why to live. Indeed, the “eternal life” to which the young man of the Gospel referred not only means life after death, he did not only want to know how to reach Heaven. He wanted to know: how must I live now in order to already obtain the life that can then also be eternal. Therefore, in this question the young man expresses his need to find meaning, fullness and truth in daily life. A person cannot live without this search for the truth about himself — who am I, what am I living for — a truth that is an incentive to widen his horizon and to go beyond material things, not in order to flee from reality but to live it in an even truer way that is richer in meaning and hope, and not merely superficial.

Moreover, I think — and I have seen and heard it in your friend’s words — that this is also your experience. The important questions we bear within us remain, they always resurface. Who are we? Where do we come from? Who do we live for? These questions are the highest sign of the transcendence of the human being and of our innate capacity not to stop at appearances. And it is precisely by looking at ourselves with truth, sincerity and courage that we understand the beauty, and also the precariousness of life and feel a dissatisfaction, a restlessness, that nothing material can assuage. In the end all promises often prove inadequate.

Dear friends, I invite you to become aware of this healthy and positive restlessness and not to be afraid to ask yourselves the fundamental questions on the meaning and value of life. Do not stop at partial, immediate answers; they are certainly easier and more convenient at the time and can bring a few moments of happiness, exaltation or intoxication but they do not lead you to the true joy of living, the joy that is born, as Jesus said, from those who build on solid rock rather than on sand. Learn how to reflect, how not to interpret your human experience superficially but rather in depth: you will discover, with wonder and joy, that your heart is a window open on the infinite! This is man’s greatness but also his difficulty.

One of the the illusions produced in the course of history was the belief that technical and scientific progress would be able, in an absolute manner, to provide answers and solutions to all humanity’s problems. And we see that this is not the case. In fact, even if this had been possible, nothing and no one would have been able to delete the most profound questions on the meaning of life and death, on the meaning of suffering, of all things, because these questions are written in the human spirit, in our hearts, beyond the sphere of needs. Even in the epoch of scientific and technological progress — which has given us so much — the human person remains a being who wishes for more, for something more than comfort and well-being; the human being who is open to the whole truth of his or her existence, who cannot stop at material things but opens to a far wider horizon.

You experience all this continually, every time you ask yourselves: but why? When you contemplate a sunset or when a piece of music stirs your heart and mind; when you feel what it

means to love truly; when you feel forcefully the sense of justice and truth, and when you feel indignant about the lack of justice, truth and happiness.

Dear young people, the human experience is a reality that we share, but it may be given various degrees of meaning. And it is here that is decided the way to direct one's life, and here that one chooses to whom to entrust it, to whom to entrust oneself. The risk is always that of remaining confined to the world of things, of the immediate, the relative, the useful, of losing sensitivity to all that refers to our spiritual dimension. It is by no means a question of contempt for the use of reason or of rejecting scientific progress, far from it. Rather, it is a matter of understanding that each one of us is not only made in a "horizontal" dimension but also has a "vertical" dimension. Scientific data and technological instruments cannot replace the world of life, the horizons of meaning and freedom, of the richness of relations of friendship and love.

Dear young people, it is precisely in being open to the whole truth about ourselves, about ourselves and about the world, that we perceive God's project for us. He meets the needs of every human being and enables us to know the mystery of his love. In the Lord Jesus who died and rose for us and gave us the Holy Spirit, we are also enabled to share in God's own life, we belong to God's family. In him, in Christ, you can find the answers to the questions that accompany you on your way, not superficially or easily but by walking with Jesus, by living with Jesus. The encounter with Christ is not resolved in adherence to a doctrine or a philosophy; what he proposes to you is to share in his life itself and thus to learn to live, to learn what the human being is, to learn what I am. Jesus answered the young man who asked him what he should do to have eternal life, in other words, to live truly, with an invitation to detach himself from his possessions and added, "come, follow me" (Mk 10:21).

Christ's words show that your life finds meaning in the mystery of God who is Love; a demanding and profound Love that goes beyond superficiality! What would your life be without this love? God takes care of men and women from creation to the end of time, when he will bring his plan of salvation to completion. In the Risen Lord we have the certainty of our hope! Christ himself, who went to the depths of death and rose, is hope in Person and the definitive Word spoken on our history, he is a positive word.

Do not be afraid to face difficult situations, moments of crisis, the trials of life, for the Lord goes with you, he is with you! I encourage you to grow in friendship with him through frequent reading of the Bible and of the whole of Sacred Scripture, through faithful participation in the Eucharist as a personal encounter with Christ, through commitment within the ecclesial community, journeying on with a good spiritual director.

Transformed by the Holy Spirit, you will be able to experience authentic freedom, which is such when it is oriented to goodness. In this way your life, inspired by a continuous search for the face of the Lord and by the sincere wish to give yourselves, will be a sign for many of your peers, an

eloquent appeal to ensure that the desire for fullness, which is in all of us, will be fulfilled at last in the encounter with the Lord Jesus. Let the mystery of Christ illuminate your whole self! You will then be able to bring to the different contexts that newness which can change relationships, institutions, and structures, to build a world that is fairer, that shows greater solidarity, enlivened by the search for the common good.

Do not give in to an individualistic or selfish logic! May you be comforted by the witness of the many young people who reached the destination of holiness: only think of St Thérèse of the Child Jesus, of St Dominic Savio, St Maria Goretti, Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati and Bl. Alberto Marvelli — from this land — and of many others, unknown to us but who lived their time in the light and power of the Gospel, and found the answer: how to live, what they must do to live.

To conclude this meeting I would like to entrust each one of you to the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church. Like her, you can say and renew your “yes”, and always magnify the Lord with your life, because he gives you words of eternal life! So courage, dear young men and women, on your journey of faith and of Christian life I too am always close to you and accompany you with my Blessing. Thank you for your attention!

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