



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI TO BOYS AND GIRLS OF CATHOLIC ACTION FOR CHILDREN

*Consistory Hall
Thursday, 20 December 2012*

Dear Boys and Girls of Catholic Action for Children,

I am pleased to meet you and accept your greetings for the Birth of the Lord. I greet you with affection together with your teachers, Prof. Franco Miano, your President and Bishop Domenico Sigalini, your General Chaplain.

You have told me that you are “in search of an author”. This is the key phrase that guides you on your way this year in ACR. My immediate question would be: Who is this author? Have you already discovered him? I am certain that with your formators and the other friends of Catholic Action, you will find an ever clearer answer to your search and that you will be able to help many others find one too. Moreover I would also like to tell you something. First, I know that you are looking for an author of life, someone who helps you live well and be happy with yourselves and with others. We know who this author is: it is God, who has shown us his face. God made us, he made us in his likeness, and above all he gave us his Son Jesus, who became a child, whom we shall soon contemplate in Holy Christmas. He grew up from childhood like you, he walked the streets of our world to convey to us God’s love which makes life beautiful and happy, full of goodness and generosity.

Of course you are also looking for the author of your joy. If I asked you what brings you joy perhaps the answer would be: playing, sports, your friends, and your parents who live for you and love you. There are many things that make you happy but there is one great Friend, who is the author of the joy of all and who fills our hearts with a joy that surpasses all other joys and lasts a lifetime: he is Jesus. Remember, dear friends, that the more you learn to know him and to speak with him, the more you will feel happiness in your hearts and you will be able to overcome the

small sorrows that sometimes trouble our minds.

Besides, you are also in search of the author of love. Can we live on our own, closed in on ourselves? If you think for a moment, you will see that the answer is clearly no. We all need to love and to feel that others accept us and love us. Feeling loved is necessary for life but it is also important to be able to love others in order to make their life and everyone's life beautiful, also the life of your peers who find themselves in difficult situations. With his life, Jesus showed us that God loves everyone without distinction and wants everyone to be happy. So I like your initiative for the month of January to support a project in Egypt by giving practical help to street children.

Finally, you are certainly looking for the author of peace, of which the world has such great need. We often think that we are able to build peace alone but it is important to realize that it is God who can give us true and solid peace. If we know how to listen to him, if we make space for him in our lives, God dissolves the selfishness that so often pollutes relationships between people and between nations and he fosters a longing for reconciliation, forgiveness and peace — even in those with hardened hearts.

Dear boys and girls of ACR, I hope you make this search together, among yourselves and with your schoolmates and playmates. If you help one another to find the great Author of life, of joy, of love and of peace you will find that this Author is never far away, rather he is very near: he is the God made Child in Jesus!

Dear friends, I wish you and all of Catholic Action a happy Christmas!

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