



The Holy See

JOHN PAUL II

ANGELUS

Castel Gandolfo

Sunday, 19 September 2004

1. *In the face of evil* manifested in various forms in the world, distressed and bewildered *human beings are asking themselves: "Why?"*.

At the dawn of this third millennium, blessed by the Great Jubilee and full of potential, humanity is scarred by the overwhelming spread of terrorism. The series of atrocious attacks on human life disturbs and worries consciences and gives rise to the searching question that recurs in the Psalms: "Why Lord? Until when?".

2. *God has answered* this anguishing question that emanates from the scandal of evil, not with an explanation of principle, as if desiring to justify himself, but *with the sacrifice of his own Son on the Cross*. The apparent triumph of evil and the definitive victory of good converge in the death of Jesus; the darkest moment in history and the revelation of divine glory; the breaking point and the centre of attraction and of the recomposition of the universe. "And I", Jesus says, "*once I am lifted up from earth, will draw all men to myself*" (Jn 12: 32).

For believers, the Cross of Christ is *an icon of hope*, because it was on the Cross that the saving plan of God's love was brought about. Several days ago, therefore, the liturgy invited us to celebrate *the Triumph of the Holy Cross*, a feast from which believers draw comfort and courage.

3. Fixing our gaze on the crucified Christ, in spiritual union with the Virgin Mary, let us continue on our way, sustained by the power of the Resurrection.

After leading the recitation of the Angelus, the Holy Father said:

I warmly welcome the English-speaking pilgrims and I encourage you to follow Christ with confidence and generosity.

I greet the Italian speaking pilgrims, especially the delegation from the Molise Region at the official opening of the school year; the parish priest, altar servers and their relatives of St George the Martyr Parish in Victoria, Gozo, Malta; and the group of the Work of the Church. On the Occasion of World Alzheimer's Day, I assure my prayer to all the sick and to all who are nursing them.

I wish everyone a good Sunday.

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