



The Holy See

POPE JOHN PAUL II

GENERAL AUDIENCE

Wednesday, 5 February 1997

Be faithful witnesses to the Father's love

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Influenza has come to the Pope's home and has affected me also. The doctor has advised me not to go out and, in particular, has asked me to forgo the usual Wednesday General Audience.

So I have to limit myself to greeting you from my study window. I do so with great affection and I thank you for your presence despite the rain, and for your prayers.

Today we are celebrating the memorial of St Agatha, martyred in Catania, probably during the persecution of Decius in the third century. Agatha means "good". Her name corresponds to reality: St Agatha "is truly a good woman", we read in the Liturgy of the Hours this morning, "coming forth from God in whose goodness she shares. She is good to her Spouse, Christ, and good also to us through sharing with us her goodness. 'Good' is the force and meaning of her name".

God, our supreme good, is the source of all good things. I hope that you will all be "good", that is, faithful witnesses to the love of our heavenly Father who fills us with so many gifts and calls us to share in his own joy.

Whoever has this faith, even in the midst of difficulties, preserves that deep peace born of a trusting abandonment to the ever provident and wise hands of God, who never disturbs the joy of his children except to prepare for them a deeper and greater joy.

I greet each one of you present here; I extend my warm wishes to the sick and I assure them all of a special remembrance in my prayer.

I affectionately bless you, as I invoke the Blessed Virgin's protection.

To the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors the Pope said:

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors, especially the groups from Indonesia and the United States. Upon all of you I cordially invoke the joy and peace of Jesus Christ.

At the end of his greeting, the Pope added extemporaneously:

I wish you a pleasant stay in Rome, between the sun and rain. Goodbye.

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