



The Holy See

JOHN PAUL II

GENERAL AUDIENCE

Wednesday, 9 June 2004

Apostolic pilgrimage to Switzerland

1. I cherish in my heart the images of various moments in the brief but full trip to Switzerland that divine Providence once again granted me to make last Saturday and Sunday. I would like to renew my gratitude to my Brother Bishops and to the civil Authorities, especially the President of the Swiss Confederation, for their welcome and for all their preparations. I also thank the Federal Council for deciding to raise the rank of Switzerland's diplomatic representation to the Holy See.

My warm gratitude likewise goes to the Sisters of Charity of the Holy Cross who gave me hospitality at their Viktoriaheim residence. Lastly, I thank all those who saw to the various aspects of my Pastoral Visit.

2. The main reason for my apostolic pilgrimage to that beloved nation was to encounter the *young Catholics of Switzerland*, who held their first National Meeting last Saturday. I thank the Lord who gave me the opportunity to spend moments of great spiritual enthusiasm with them, and to address a Message to the new Swiss generations which I would like to extend to all the young people in Europe and across the world. I can sum up this Message, so dear to my heart, in three verbs: "*arise!*", "*listen!*" and "*set out!*". It is Christ himself, risen and alive, who repeats these words to every boy and girl of our time. It is he who invites the youth of the third millennium to "*arise*", *that is, to give their lives full meaning*. I wanted to echo this appeal in the conviction that it is Christ alone, the Redeemer of man, who can help young people to "*arise*" anew from negative experiences and outlooks in order to grow to their full human, spiritual and moral stature.

3. On Sunday morning, the Solemnity of the Holy Trinity, I was able to *concelebrate the Eucharist*

with the Bishops and many priests who had come from every corner of Switzerland. The festive rite took place at Allmend Esplanade, a vast space outside the BEA Bern Expo Palace. Thus, with one voice we raised praise and thanksgiving to the Triune God for *the beauties of creation* that he has lavished upon Switzerland, and especially for *the communion of Love*, of which he is the source.

In the light of this fundamental mystery of the Christian faith, I renewed my *appeal for the unity of all Christians*, inviting the Catholics to live it first among themselves, making the Church "the home and the school of communion" (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, n. 43). The Holy Spirit who creates unity also impels us towards *mission*, so that the *truth* about God and man which was revealed in Christ, may be witnessed and proclaimed to all. The image of the Triune God is engraved in every human being who in him alone finds peace.

4. Before leaving Bern, I wanted to meet the Association of Former Swiss Guards. This was a *providential opportunity* to express my gratitude for the precious service that the Swiss Guard Corps has been rendering to the Apostolic See for *almost five centuries*. How many thousands of young men from Swiss families and parishes have made their special contribution to the Successor of Peter in the course of these centuries! Young men, like all young men, full of life and ideals, were able to express through this service their sincere love for Christ and for the Church. May the young people in Switzerland and throughout the world discover the *marvellous unity between faith and life*, and prepare themselves to carry out with zeal the mission to which God calls them!

May Mary Most Holy, whom I warmly thank for having brought about this Apostolic Journey, my 103rd, obtain for everyone this great and valuable gift which is the secret of true joy.

To special groups

I extend a warm welcome to the *English-speaking pilgrims* here today, especially the many school and university students and other groups from England, Finland, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and the United States. Upon all of you I invoke the grace and peace of Jesus Christ, and I wish you many blessings during your stay in Rome.

I now address an affectionate greeting to the *young people*, the *sick* and the *newly-weds*. Dear friends, the forthcoming feast of *Corpus Christi* invites us to deepen our faith in the Eucharistic Mystery.

Dear *young people*, may the Eucharist be your daily spiritual sustenance; may it be for you, dear *sick people*, support and comfort in suffering; may it help you, dear *newly-weds*, to make constant

progress on the path of conjugal holiness.

On the occasion of the Solemnity of *Corpus Christi* which we will be celebrating tomorrow, I invite Romans and pilgrims to take part in great numbers in Holy Mass that will be celebrated in the Square of St John Lateran, and in the Eucharistic procession that will end at St Mary Major's.

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