



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA AND ASTURIAS

ON THE OCCASION OF FOURTH WORLD YOUTH DAY

MASS AT "MONTE DEL GOZO"

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

Sunday, 20 August 1989

1. *"Peoples shall yet come, even the inhabitants of many cities; the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, 'Let us go at once to entreat the favour of the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts'" (Zech 8: 20-21).*

I cordially greet all those present!

Inhabitants of numerous cities! Representatives of many peoples and nations! You have come here not just from Galicia, from the *whole of Spain, from all over Europe, from the Atlantic to the Urals*, but also from *North America and Latin America, the Middle East, from Africa, Asia and Oceania*.

It is likewise a pleasure for me to greet the young people who have come from so many parish and diocesan communities, and from associations, movements and groups of the Church of God.

I greet the young people present at this Eucharistic Celebration and your contemporaries, wherever they may be.

I have invited you on this pilgrimage on the occasion of the World Youth Day of the Year of Our Lord 1989. I thank you wholeheartedly for your presence here.

2. *This place is united to the memory of the Apostle of Jesus Christ. One of the two sons of*

Zebedee: *James, brother of John*. Through the Gospel we know his father's name and we also know his mother. We know that she intervened before Jesus on behalf of her sons: "Command that these two sons of mine may sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom" (Mt 20: 21).

The mother was anxious to assure the future of her sons. She observed all that Jesus did; she had seen the divine power that accompanied his mission. She certainly believed that he was the Messiah announced by the prophets, the Messiah who was going to restore the kingdom of Israel (cfr. Acts 1: 6).

We should not be surprised at the attitude of this mother. We should not be surprised at a daughter of Israel who loved her people. And she loved her sons. *She wanted for them what she considered a good thing*.

3. Look at James, son of Zebedee, a fisherman like his father and brother; the son of a determined mother.

James followed Jesus of Nazareth. When, in reply to their mother's question the Master asked, "*Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?*", (Mt 20: 22), James and his brother John answered without a doubt: "We are able" (Mt 20: 22).

This is not a calculated reply, but rather one which is full of confidence.

James did not yet know, and in any case if he knew something, he did not fully know, *what this "cup" meant*. Christ was speaking of the cup which he himself had to drink, the cup which he had received from the Father.

The moment came when Christ *fulfilled what he had earlier announced*: he drank the cup which his Father had given him to the last drop.

The truth is that James was not with his Master on Golgotha. Neither were Peter nor the other Apostles. Only John remained with Christ's Mother, he alone.

Nevertheless, *later all of them understood* - and James understood - *the truth about the "cup"*. He understood that Christ had to drink it to the last drop. He understood that it was necessary for him to undergo all that; that he had to suffer death on a cross...

Christ, in effect, the Son of God, "came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mt 20: 28).

Christ is the servant of human Redemption!

Thus: "whoever would be great among you must be your servant" (*Mt 20: 26*).

4. Down through the centuries *people* from many cities and nations *have come on pilgrimage* here; to the Apostle to whom Christ said: "you will drink my cup".

Young people have come in pilgrimage to the tomb of the Apostle to learn that Gospel truth: "*whoever would be great among you must be your servant*".

In these words we find *the essential criterion of human greatness*. This criterion is new. It was new in the time of Christ and continues to be so two thousand years later.

This criterion is new. It implies a transformation, *a renewal of the criteria by which the world is governed*. "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you" (*Mt 20: 25-26*).

The criterion by which the world is governed is the criterion of *success*. To have power... To have economic power, so as to make the dependence of others be seen. *To have cultural power in order to manipulate consciences*. To use... and to abuse!

Such is the "*spirit of this world*".

Does this mean perhaps that power in itself is evil? Does this mean that the economy - economic initiative - is in itself bad?

No! By no means. Both of them can also be a way a serving. This is the spirit of Christ, the truth of the Gospel. This truth and this spirit are expressed in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela through the Apostle, who — according to his mother's wish — would be the first; however — following Christ — he became a servant.

5. Why are you here, you young people of the nineties and of the twentieth century? Do you feel perhaps *within yourselves "the spirit of this world"*, in so far as this era, rich in means of use and abuse, *struggles against the spirit of the Gospel?*

Have you not perhaps come here to convince yourselves once and for all that *to be great means to serve? However... are you prepared to drink of this cup? Are you prepared to let yourselves be permeated by the body and blood of Christ; so as to die to the old man which is in us and rise again with him? Do you feel the Lord's strength which can enable you to bear your sacrifices, sufferings and the "crosses" which weigh upon the young people who are disoriented as regards the meaning of life, manipulated by power, unemployed, hungry, submerged in drugs and violence, slaves of the eroticism which is spreading everywhere...? Know that Christ's yoke is easy... and that only in him will we find the hundredfold here and now, and eternal life later.*

6. Why are you here, you young people of the nineties and of the twentieth century? Do you feel perchance within yourselves "the spirit of this world"?

Have you not perhaps come here — I ask you again — to convince yourselves once and for all that *to be great* means *to serve*? This service is certainly not mere humanitarian sentimentality. Nor is the community of the disciples of Christ a volunteer agency or social help group. Such a concept of service would imply stooping to the level of the "spirit of this world". No! Here we are dealing with something more. The radicality, quality and destiny of this "service" to which we have all been called must be seen in the context of the human Redemption. Because we have been created, we have been called, we have been destined, first and foremost, to serve God, in the image and likeness of Christ who, as Lord of all creation, as centre of the cosmos and of history, showed his royal power through obedience unto death, and was glorified in the Resurrection (cfr. *Lumen Gentium*, 36). The kingdom of God is realized by means of this "service", which is the fullness and measure of all human service. It does not act according to human criterion through power, might and money. Each one of us is asked for a total readiness to follow Christ, who "came not to be served, but to serve".

I invite you, dear friends, to discover your true vocation to cooperate in the spreading of this Kingdom of truth and life, of holiness and grace, of justice, love and peace. If you really wish to serve your brothers and sisters, let Christ reign in your hearts, let him help you to discern and grow in dominion over yourselves, to strengthen you in the virtues, to fill you above all with his charity, to guide you along the path which leads to the "condition of the perfect one". Do not be afraid to be saints! This is the liberty with which Christ has set us free (cfr. *Gal* 5: 1). Not as the powers of this world promise it, with false hope and deceit: total autonomy, a breaking of every dependency as creatures and sons and daughters, an affirmation of self-sufficiency which leaves us defenceless before our limitations and weaknesses, alone in the prison of our egoism, slaves to the "spirit of this world", condemned to the "bondage of decay" (*Rom* 8: 21).

For this reason, I ask the Lord, to help you to grow in this "true freedom", as a basic and illuminating criterion of judgement and choice in life. This same freedom will direct your moral behaviour in truth and in charity. It will help you to discover authentic love, uncorrupted by an alienating and harmful permissiveness. It will make you people who are open to a possible total self-giving in the priesthood or consecrated life. It will make you grow in humanness through study and work. It will inspire your works of solidarity and your acts of service to those in need, whether in body or in soul. It will enable you to become "masters", so as to serve better, and not "slaves", victims and followers of the dominant trends in attitudes and ways of behaviour.

7. To serve: *to be a person for others*.

This is also a truth which the Apostle Paul teaches very eloquently, in the second Reading of today's liturgy.

"I bid every one among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, *but to think with sober judgement, each according to the measure of faith which God has assigned to him*" (Rom 12: 3).

And the Apostle adds: "Having gifts that *differ*" (Rom 12: 6).

Yes! You need to know well the gifts God has granted you in Christ. It is necessary to *know well the gift* you have received, *in order to give it to others*, to contribute to the common good.

Yes. You need to perceive well the gifts God has granted you in Christ. You need to know well the gift you have received *in the very experience of family and parish life, in working together with others in associations, and in the charismatic flourishing of movements*, so as to be able to give it to others: *thus to enrich the communion and missionary thrust of the Church, to be witnesses of Christ in your neighbourhood and school, in the university and factory, in places of work and recreation...*, to contribute to the common good, *as servants of experiences of growth in humanity, of dignity and solidarity, in which young people may be authentic protagonists of more human ways of life.*

8. This is what the Apostle teaches. What he says is not just a mere teaching, but a fervent call.

"*Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints, practise hospitality*" (Rom 12: 9-13).

Is he not perhaps saying this particularly to you, to young people? Does the fact that you are young not imply a *particular sensitivity to this plan of life and action*, to this world of values?

Does it not open towards this world? And if, by chance, it feels the resistance which comes from within, or indeed from without, *does not your being young dispose you to struggle precisely for just such a "form" of life?*

This form has been given to human life by Christ. He knows what is within man (cfr. *Jn 2: 25*).

"Christ the new Adam, in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his most high calling" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 22).

Dear young people, let yourselves be won by him! Christ alone is the way, the truth and the life as, in the remarkable Gospel synthesis, the theme of our World Youth Day proclaims.

O Mountain of Joy, to which pilgrims have come, you remind us of one of the most beautiful

characteristics of Santiago and its roads: universality.

I invite all those who travel it to maintain, as you have always done, the bonds of catholicity.

9. You have come here on pilgrimage to the tomb of the Apostle who can *confirm at first hand, if we can put it like that, the truth of the vocation of man*, whose reference point is Christ.

You have come *to find your personal vocation*.

You draw close to the altar to offer, with the bread and wine, your youth, *your search* for truth, and everything which is good and beautiful in you.

All that *creative restlessness*.

All the sufferings of your young hearts.

10. Being here among you, I wish to say with the Psalmist: Behold "the earth has yielded its harvest" (*Ps 67 [66]: 6*), its most precious fruit: the person, human youth.

May the *Face of God* reflected in the human face of Christ. Redeemer of man, shine before you.

"Let the peoples praise thee, O God; let all the peoples praise thee" (*Ps 67 [66]: 5*).

May your contemporaries, contemplating your pilgrimage, be able to exclaim: "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you" (*Zech 8: 23*).

This is the wish of the Pope, the Bishop of Rome, who has participated with you in this pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela.

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