



# The Holy See

---

PASTORAL VISIT TO ST LIBORIUS PARISH IN ROME

## ***HOMILY OF JOHN PAUL II***

*Sunday, 17 January 1999*

1. *"Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"* (Jn 1:29).

The witness of John the Baptist still resounds today, almost 2,000 years after the event recounted in the Gospel: the Precursor points to Jesus of Nazareth as the long-awaited Messiah and invites us all to renew and deepen our faith in him.

It is Jesus our Redeemer! His saving mission, solemnly proclaimed at the moment of his Baptism in the Jordan, culminates in the paschal mystery, when on the Cross he, the true Lamb sacrificed for us, frees and redeems man, every man, from evil and death.

The great message of the Baptist is proclaimed again in the Eucharistic liturgy. Before Communion, the celebrant presents the consecrated host for the adoration of the faithful, saying: "This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Happy are those who are called to his supper". In a short while we who are taking part in the Eucharistic Banquet will also receive the true paschal Lamb, sacrificed for the salvation of all humanity.

2. *"Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"* (Jn 1:29).

Dear parishioners of St Liborius, I address you with the Baptist's words which have just re-echoed in our assembly. They are words that clearly express the significance of my Pastoral Visits and apostolic journeys, which enable me to meet my brothers and sisters in the faith in Rome and in other parts of the world. Like the Baptist, I consider it my duty to show everyone the Lamb of God, Jesus, the only Saviour of the world yesterday, today and for ever. In the mystery of his Incarnation, he became Emmanuel, "God-with-us", drawing close to us and giving meaning to time and to our daily activities. He is our constant reference-point, the light that illumines our steps, the source of our hope.

Dear brothers and sisters, I greet you all affectionately, together with the Cardinal Vicar and the Auxiliary Bishop of this

area. I greet your zealous parish priest, Fr Paolo Cardona, from the Secular Institute of the "Apostolici Sodales", the priests who work with him, the Franciscan Sisters of the Lord and all who in various ways offer the parish community their generous collaboration.

I extend a special greeting to Mons. Bruno Theodor Kresing, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Paderborn, Germany, who is here today to underscore the bonds of spiritual communion that join your parish with the German Archdiocese, which I visited in 1996. Since then, the Ecclesial Community of Paderborn has generously participated in the building of this new parish complex. I would like here to express my deepest gratitude and to invoke upon both communities the constant protection of their common patron, St Liborius.

The bonds of communion and solidarity which link various Christian communities are spiritual and pastoral experiences of great value and are an invitation to foster ever greater openness, mutual understanding and acceptance. Our thoughts turn naturally to the forth coming Jubilee, when Rome will host numerous pilgrims from every continent. I am sure that the parishes, religious institutes and families in Rome will generously open the doors of their homes to them with Gospel warmth and simplicity. It will be an occasion for a fruitful exchange of spiritual gifts, as well as a magnificent ecclesial experience that will help everyone feel he belongs to the one Church that has spread to every corner of the earth.

3. Parishioners of St Liborius, your community has received much and this is why you are now called, in turn, to be generous to others. You live in a neighbourhood where the parish church is the only significant gathering place. With the newly equipped structures you have available, you are encouraged to open yourselves with greater zeal to the needs of the area.

On this occasion, I am pleased to inaugurate the "*Sportello di Fraternità*" which, with the help of the diocesan Caritas, is starting today; it will combine the valuable professional resources in the community and put them at the service of the neediest. Continue to plan and carry out other charitable projects, thus courageously proclaiming the Gospel. Everyone, even those who are not burdened by precarious material conditions, needs someone who, like the Baptist, shows them Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Devote all your energies to the City Mission which this year, by continuing and strengthening its commitment to families, is directed to the world of work and other human activities. After erecting a church of bricks, you must now see that the Church built of living stones, that is, you the baptized, is ever more attractive through your own convinced efforts. Open to dialogue, be prepared to make the most of every opportunity to grow in brotherhood with Christians and non-Christians, with believers of other faiths and non-believers.

4. To accomplish the demanding missionary work that the Lord asks of you, you must be aware of the personal vocation to holiness of all the baptized. The Apostle Paul, at the beginning of his Letter to the Corinthians, recalls that, *sanctified in Christ Jesus, we are "called to be saints together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord"* (1 Cor 1:2). We are called

to live the Gospel with total fidelity. Only in this way will we truly share the same faith in Christ, the same sacraments and the universal vocation to love with the other communities throughout the world.

St Paul greets the Christians of Corinth with these words: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 1:3). "*Grace to you and peace from God our Father*": I repeat this to you today, brothers and sisters of this parish, and to you members of the Ecclesial Community of Paderborn united by your common devotion to St Liborius. May the heavenly Father protect you; may he help you with his grace and grant you peaceful days.

For each of you, I call upon the protection of Mary, the Virgin who listens and walks with us. Walk together on the spiritual and ecclesial journey to the third Christian millennium. Walk full of trust and missionary zeal, following St Liborius and your holy patrons. In accepting St John's invitation, walk with courage and fidelity in Christ's footsteps. He is "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"! He is "the light of the nations who brings salvation to the ends of the earth".

Amen!

© Copyright 1999 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

---

Copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana