



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE YOUNG MUSICIANS
OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY YOUTH ORCHESTRA**

Thursday, 30 April 1981

Dear friends,

I am happy for this opportunity to be with you, young musicians, who make up the European Community Youth Orchestra. I know that you are here in order to assist the disabled in Europe through a benefit performance this evening, as well as to help the victims of the earthquake in Southern Italy by other concerts in the near future. Because of the generosity that you have shown in this regard, it gives me special pleasure to welcome you today.

You arrive in Rome at a time when the Church is celebrating with fresh enthusiasm the Resurrection of Christ. He is the one who says of himself, "I came that they might have life, and have it abundantly". Jesus Christ showed the depth of his love for all people by his suffering and death. By his Resurrection he offers a springtime of hope to all who would model their actions on his sacrificial love for others. The Second Vatican Council reminded the Church that she must be concerned that life in the world should conform more "to man's surpassing dignity", in all its aspects, so as to make that life ever more human.

In fulfilling this charge, the Church is involved with everything that influences the human person. As I said in my Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*: "man is the primary route that the Church must travel in fulfilling her mission: he is the primary and fundamental way for the Church, the way traced out by Christ himself". With genuine interest, I have noted the aims and goals of your European Community Symphony Orchestra. I know that you too share with the Church a profound desire to make life ever more human. And you strive to do this in two ways.

First of all, the artistic expression of your music touches the deepest longings and feelings of the human spirit. More than technical skill, your performances enrich your life and that of your listeners by inspiring in the human soul a renewed appreciation of truth, beauty and goodness.

Yet beyond this, you seek to exercise the social and ethical aspect of your artistic expression by offering it with gladness of heart for the benefit of your neighbour. In this way you strive to build up solidarity among different peoples, to unite those who are separated by different cultures or national ties, to challenge your listeners to go beyond the externals that tend to create barriers between individuals, in order to stress the fundamental dignity of every human life from the very moment of conception.

Your Orchestra makes a contribution to a future of increased cooperation and understanding among the nations of Europe and, yes, perhaps ultimately, of the whole world. For these elements are building-blocks of world peace and international justice, and reflect what is most noble in the human spirit.

I congratulate you, my brothers and sisters, in this worthy venture. I know that you will find much personal satisfaction in working together, both from the joy you experience in the music you perform, as well as from the friendship that you make.

But even more than this, I pray that the ideals you cherish of fostering the dignity of all men and women will be effectively promoted in the hearts and attitudes of those who understand your message. I ask Almighty God to grant success to all your efforts to ensure that life will be ever more human. May God bless you all.

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