



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER
POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO PILGRIMS FROM ROUEN**

Friday, 17 April 1998

Dear Friends,

1. The Bishop of Rome is happy to welcome you to his house on the occasion of your week of prayer and reflection. I warmly greet you all, particularly Archbishop Joseph Duval of Rouen, who is directing your pilgrimage.

With the help of the Holy Spirit, you wish to discover God's Church which is in Rome, a Church founded by the Apostles Peter and Paul. By following in the footsteps of these two great witnesses to Christ, you have wanted the Church to be at the heart of your spiritual search. Prolonging what the young people of the whole world experienced last summer in France during World Youth Day, I warmly encourage you all to participate in building fraternal Christian communities that are open to others.

The Easter season is a favourable time for rediscovering that your Baptism enables you to take part in the new life of Christ as active members of his Church. The risen Christ invites you to follow him on the way of holiness. Advance confidently on the paths of life where he comes to meet you, by being diligent in listening to his word, faithful to fraternal communion, to the Eucharist and to prayer (cf. Acts 2:42)! In this way you will be putting your baptismal commitments into practice.

2. In this year dedicated to the Holy spirit, tomorrow several of you will receive the sacrament of Confirmation. May this be an occasion for you all to become more deeply aware of the Spirit's place in the life of the Church and of each Christian. It is he who gives growth in human lives to the seeds of the definitive salvation which will come at the end of time. It is he, again, who creates the unity of all, through the complementary gifts he grants to each person: this constitutes the Church's wealth.

3. During the privileged time of this pilgrimage, I invite you to ask the Lord for enlightenment about your own vocation.

Each of you is called to find his place in the Church. Some are invited by Christ to follow him more especially through the ministerial priesthood or the religious life. Do not be afraid to respond to him generously! Dear friends, in offering your life for the service of God and men, you will find happiness and fulfilment for your whole being!

4. At the tombs of Peter and of the Apostle to the Gentiles may your hearts also be opened to the breadth of the Church's universal mission. You are sent into the world to live out your Baptism, recognizing everyone as a brother and sister to be loved. As I frequently recalled, following the Second Vatican Council, humanity forms one family, and God sent his Son to share our life for the salvation of all. As we celebrate the Lord's Resurrection, may the Holy Spirit lead you to become ardent witnesses to the message of Christ's salvation for ever!

5. Dear friends, I entrust you to the motherly intercession of Mary, whom we like to address with the title *Mother of the Church*; may she help you meet her Son in order to follow him! I gladly impart my Apostolic Blessing to you.

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