



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE LEGIONARIES OF CHRIST AND THE MEMBERS
OF THE REGNUM CHRISTI MOVEMENT**

Thursday, 4 January 2001

Dear Legionaries of Christ!

Dear Members of the Regnum Christi Movement!

1. I am deeply pleased to extend my greeting to you on the occasion of your Jubilee pilgrimage to Rome, during which you are celebrating the 60th anniversary of your foundation. You come from various countries of the world: I greet each and every one, hoping that this celebration will give solid and strong support to your faith in the Lord Jesus and to your decision to bear witness to him among your brethren.

With special affection I greet your beloved founder, Fr Marcial Maciel, and extend to him my heartfelt congratulations on this important event, cordially thanking him for the words he addressed to me on everyone's behalf. I especially appreciated his confirmation of your characteristic fidelity to the Successor of Peter. Your full involvement in the mystery of the Church's unity is evidenced by your communion with the Pope.

2. In these days you have wanted to thank God for all the good he has lavished on your spiritual family. In looking back to 3 January 1941, when this work began in Mexico City, you have realized that the little seed which the divine sower planted in the soil of a few young hearts is now a leafy tree (cf. *Mt* 13: 32), which embraces many priests, consecrated persons and lay people whose ideal is to devote their lives to spreading Christ's kingdom in the world.

You have come to Rome in the Jubilee Year to renew *your faith in Jesus Christ*. May the Christocentric character of your spirituality help you to enter more deeply into the spirit of this Jubilee, which has prompted us to meditate on the mystery of the Incarnation and on the person of Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and for ever (*Heb* 13: 8). To proclaim Christ to today's world in the various sectors of society is your apostolic ideal. But to preach Christ, you must have, like St Paul, a profound experience of his love, so that you can say with him: "the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (*Gal* 2: 20). I urge you, as your motto says, "Thy kingdom come!",

never to slacken in your dream of tirelessly working to make the kingdom of love, grace, justice and peace a reality in individuals and in society. I hope that one of the chief fruits of this intense spiritual experience in Rome will be the renewal in your souls of sincere love for Jesus Christ, so that you can personally share with many other men and women the happiness that flows from this unique friendship with him.

3. Faith in the person of Jesus Christ spurs you *fervently to love the Church*, the universal sacrament of salvation, which continues his work throughout history. You therefore wish to nourish your spiritual and apostolic charism with the great lifeblood that flows through his Body, by living a special spirit of ecclesial communion with the Successor of Peter and with the other Pastors of the particular Churches. As you have done thus far, continue with renewed fervour to spread the Magisterium and teaching of the Church, both through the many initiatives begun for this purpose over the past 60 years and through many others that your apostolic zeal will have the courage to inspire for the good of souls.

4. One of the important spiritual traits of your service in the Church is your commitment to the *spirit of authentic evangelical charity*. At the Last Supper the Lord stated clearly and for all time that fraternal love would be the distinctive feature of his followers: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn 13: 35). It has been your desire to take up this evangelical challenge, placing particular emphasis on the fraternal warmth of your interpersonal relations, and furthering the spirit of charity in thought and word, passing over in silence the errors of others and bringing up only those deeds of theirs which are positive and helpful. May the Lord preserve you in this spirit, helping you to bear witness in every way to that Christian charity which St Paul so masterfully described in the famous hymn to love found in his First Letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 13: 4-8).

Another trait which distinguishes your charism is *apostolic fervour*. You show this in all the many works you have undertaken, especially in education, evangelization, social communications, the spreading of the Church's social teaching, the cultural and human promotion of the disadvantaged, and the training of diocesan priests. In all of this you strive to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit, who constantly renews the face of the Church with gifts and charisms which enrich and strengthen her. In a secularized world such as our own, built in large part on neglect of transcendent truths and values, the faith of many of our brothers and sisters is sorely tried. Because of this, there is a need today more than ever for a confident proclamation of the Gospel which, casting aside all crippling fears, announces with intellectual depth and with courage the truth about God, about man, about the world. To you, Legionaries of Christ and members of *Regnum Christi*, I repeat the words of St Catherine of Siena which I proposed to the young people at the World Youth Day: "If you are what you should be, you will set the whole world ablaze!".

5. Generously open the doors of your soul to this invitation. I turn in particular to those whom Christ is calling to follow him with total dedication in the priesthood and the consecrated life. May the Blessed Virgin, filled with the Holy Spirit and a pilgrim in faith, help you to fulfil your goals.

As you return home to your daily tasks, know that the Pope is close to you and is praying for you, so that you will be faithful to your Christian vocation and your specific charism. May the Holy Spirit open your hearts, making you courageous messengers of the Gospel and witnesses to the risen Christ, Redeemer and Saviour of the world.

I bless you all with affection!

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