



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC PILGRIMAGE
OF HIS HOLINESS OF PAUL VI
TO WEST ASIA, OCEANIA AND AUSTRALIA

MASS TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE

HOMILY OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI

Australia, Sydney
Wednesday, 2 December 1970

Dear Sons and Daughters,

It was our wish to include in the programme of Our meetings this special contact with your world: that of the young people of Australia. It was not that you are not a part of the Catholic community-of course you are, since you share in the one baptism and the one faith (*Eph. 4: 5*). But it seemed to Us that within this people, itself so young, you are the young amid the young, and you have a right to a special message.

We would like you to see this talk as a sign of the special liking the Church has for youth. It is not that the Church feels old and looks for support in the strength of the young and vigorous. Certainly she can be glad of her long history, and the rich experience she has gained from contact with many generations of all races and cultures. We do not think that this is any hindrance to her taking an interest in the rising generation of today, or seeking their support. Her reason for existence and her justification is to extend the presence of Jesus Christ among men, to spread his Word and to communicate his life. Did Christ not call himself «the Way, the Truth and the Life»? (*Io. 14: 6*) Is he not the Light for all men? (*Io. 1: 9*) He is the new and perfect man, eternally young because he has mastery over the changing events of time. In our time just as in the first ages of Christianity he is the one who fully reveals man to himself and makes it possible for man to be completely fulfilled. The Council rightly called Christ «the goal of human history, the focal point of the longings of history and of civilization, the centre of the human race, the joy of every heart, and the answer to all its yearnings» (*Gaudium et spes*, 45).

The Church's mission is directly related to Christ's will to go towards each person, in order to help him fully to develop his inmost being in accordance with his talents, and in order to raise him up and save him by making him a son of God. It is from Christ that the Church receives a power beyond that of any merely human society, the power to be the full answer for your young hearts; for she is «the real youth of the world» (The Council's Message to Youth, 8 December 1965). She renews herself unceasingly, offering each new generation and each new people the good news which saves them, as she draws from the infinite treasure of the Word of God the answer to the most puzzling situations.

That is why the Church comes to you in complete honesty and simplicity. She knows what values you possess-your enthusiasm for the future, your strength in numbers, your thirst for what is just and true and your aversion for hatred and its worst expression which is war, even your rejection of the out-of-date elements in present-day civilization. God placed these virtues in you so that you might meet a new situation with a new attitude. He who created life, he who wished by his Incarnation to share fully-except for sin-in our human condition, has likewise the ability to make human history go forward towards its goal. He can save this world from division and chaos by leading it, with the free cooperation of each individual, towards the wonderful destiny of the Kingdom of God.

There is an intimate connection, dear young people, between your faith and your life. In the very dissatisfaction that torments you and in your criticism of that society-which today is rightly called a «permissive society» - there is a ray of light.

In that society there are unfortunately every day more aggressive acts, new attitudes and behaviour patterns which are not Christian. When you denounce them and ask that society eliminate them and replace them with values authentically based on real justice, real sincerity, real moral rectitude and real brotherhood, you are indeed right. You have not only approbation but the full support of the Church.

But be attentive to the manner in which you treat this matter and make this effort, for if you turn back on yourselves, if you set yourselves up as supreme judges of your truth, if you reject the past wholesale - that is to say, if you reject what has been built up by the efforts of representatives of the same human race to which you belong, people with fundamentally the same qualities and defects -then the world of tomorrow will not be noticeably better, even if it is different; the root of the trouble will not have been extirpated: namely, man's pride. «Man can organize the world apart from God», We said in Our encyclical *Populorum progressio*, «but without God man can organize it in the end only to man's detriment. An isolated humanism is an inhuman humanism» (*Populorum progressio*, 42).

If on the other hand you agree to encounter the one who more than all others gave proof of his love for man by delivering himself up to death to save him, then you will light the flame of your ideals at the fire of his infinite love: in that case you will share in man's advance towards the light. «For of all the names in the world given to men, this is the only one by which we can be saved» (Act . 4: 12).

That is your vocation, dear sons and daughters. That is where your duty lies. You must make the choice: you will be either for man with Jesus Christ, or against man. It is not a matter of a sentimental or superficial choice. It is a matter of your lives and those of others.

It is up to you, with the help of your parents, educators and friends, among yourselves and within organizations suited to

your age and your studies, to deepen your knowledge and understanding of these realities of your faith. It must not be that your lives as young people should now depend on the light of the faith you had as children.

Besides, it is not a matter of you alone. It is a matter of all your brothers and sisters of Australia. It is a matter that goes beyond your frontiers; it is a matter of the world's salvation. It was not as isolated individuals that God saved us; his plan for us was to form a united and peaceful people. You will find your happiness essentially in sharing it with others. There is no lack of opportunity to do so. They come from among your own numbers, from your companions in the same course. They come from your parishes, from the poor, from the sick. They come from beyond the seas, from the world which surrounds you and which is trying to find the real reasons of living.

With great fervour and affection we beg the Lord to enlighten those who doubt, to comfort those who suffer and to reveal himself to all of you. We pray that he who is so good and so close to each of you will give peace and joy to your hearts. With very deep affection We give Our special Apostolic Blessing to you who are gathered here and to all the youth of Australia.