



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO A GROUP OF IRISH PILGRIMS

Friday, 23 February 1979

Dear young people,

YOU HAVE COME a long way on foot: from Ireland to Rome! You have dedicated your journey to the cause of charity, in the hope of rendering help to children in need.

The Pope is happy to see you this morning, to welcome you to the Vatican, and to confirm you in your Christian love, as well as in the faith that is at the foundation of all virtue.

Be immensely grateful for your Catholic and apostolic faith. It is a great gift of God, given to your forefathers and preserved throughout the centuries with great generosity and sacrifice.

And strive always to live lives that are consistent with your belief. Keep up your concern for others, your solicitude for those who suffer, your love for all your fellow men and women, whoever they may be and whatever may be their convictions or their condition of life. Remember how Saint John characterizes all religion, how he summarizes the will of God: "This is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another"^[1].

In other words, dear young people, what I am asking for today is: fidelity and consistency. Your calling – the vocation of all of you – is one of fidelity to the message of God's truth that you have received. And then you must act in a way that is consistent with what you believe. Above all, this consistency manifests itself in love: in generous, disciplined, unselfish love of others – in order to fulfil the great commandment: " If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another"^[2].

And when you return to your homes, take my blessing to your loved ones. My special Apostolic Blessing goes to all Ireland.

[1] 1 lo. 3, 23.

[2] 1 lo. 4, 11.

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