



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY
OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO JAMAICA, MEXICO AND DENVER (COLORADO)
ON THE OCCASION OF THE EIGHTH WORLD YOUTH DAY
(AUGUST 8-16, 1993)

MEETING WITH THE CHILDREN
OF "MOUNT ST. VINCENT" HOME

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

Denver

Sunday, 15 August 1993

Dear Children, and dear Friends,

1. I have been looking forward to this visit with you, the children of "*Mount Saint Vincent*" Home, together with your families and friends, the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, and all the Staff of this beautiful Center. Thank you for making the Pope very happy.

Over a hundred years ago Bishop Joseph P. Machebeuf, the first Bishop of Denver, founded this Center. Since then "*Mount Saint Vincent Home*" has given expression to the charism of Gospel charity which marks the religious consecration of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth. I commend to the Lord the Sisters who have served here in the past, and thank the present Sisters for their untiring dedication. To the Staff and assistants I offer a word of warm encouragement: go on serving these special children and see in them the ones that Jesus one day called to himself and blessed, because their innocent trust showed what it means to belong to his Kingdom. Indeed, Jesus sees himself in them: "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me" (Mt. 18: 5).

Dear young friends, in order to get well you have to follow a special program of treatment and training. We all support and encourage you. The Pope will pray for you and he looks forward to hearing about your progress.

2. The "World Youth Day" reminded us of the words of the Good Shepherd: *"I came that they might have life and have it abundantly"* (Jn. 10: 10). We are never alone if we allow Jesus to walk with us on the path of life. There is always hope, because he laid down his life for all those who belong to him (Cf. *ibid.* 10: 17). He is the healer of our souls, for he reconciles us with God the Father, with ourselves and with those around us. He is the Friend who loves us and understands us as we are, with all our hopes and all our difficulties.

Concern for the child even before birth, from the first moment of conception and then throughout the years of infancy and youth, is the primary and fundamental test of the relationship of one human being to another (Cf. John Paul II, *Address during the visit to the United Nations Organization*, 21, 2 October 1979). *The child is that delicate center around which the moral ethos of families, and therefore of whole nations, is either built up or shattered.* In Rome and on my visits to the Church in the different countries I see so many children. On their smiling faces I read the possibility for every society and every generation to say to them: you are our love, you are our joy, you are our greatest concern! For your sake we will work honestly and hard to build a better world, a true civilization of love!

At the same time I have seen other children's faces: in hospitals, in centers for children with AIDS or other tragic diseases, in refugee camps. And I am moved to appeal once more on their behalf to people of good will, to the leaders of the nations, to Governments and International Agencies, to all who will hear. There exists the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, adopted at the United Nations in 1989 and already signed by many States, including the Holy See. I hope that more and more States will ensure the juridical force and practical application of the *Convention*, so that no child on earth will be left without the legal guarantee of his or her fundamental rights.

3. May God give us hearts large enough to embrace all children everywhere, and arms strong enough to protect and support them!

Dear young friends, when I return to Rome I will carry with me the memory of this special meeting. May Almighty God bless and protect each one of you!

Thank you very much for this acceptance of my visit. It was very nice for me to be with you. It is pleasant to be with the children and you are looking so well with so much simplicity, so much hope. And I wish to you – all of you – and your families, your parents, and the Sisters. I wish you all the best for everyone of you: for your formation, for your maturity, human Christian maturity, and I wish you above all, that Christ be still with you and in your hearts. He likes to dwell, to remain, in the hearts of the children. Thank you again.

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