



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO THE PHILIPPINES,
PAPUA NEW GUINEA, AUSTRALIA AND SRI LANKA

10th WORLD YOUTH DAY

**MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO CATHOLICS IN CHINA**

Manila

Saturday, 14 January 1995

From Manila, where I have come for the celebration of the Tenth World Youth Day, I wish to send a special and affectionate greeting to all Chinese Catholics who make present and visible on Chinese soil the Church of Christ, One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic, a community of faith, hope and charity.

Dear brothers and sisters of the Church in China, I am well aware of the difficulties amid which you are called to bear witness to your faith in Christ. The Second Vatican Council speaks of the whole Church in a way that is very applicable to your experience: "Like a pilgrim in a foreign land, the Church presses forward amid the persecutions of the world and the consolations of God, proclaiming the Cross and Death of the Lord until he comes (cf. 1 Cor. 11:26). By the power of the Risen Lord she is given strength to overcome patiently and lovingly the afflictions and hardships which assail her from within and without, and to show forth in the world the mystery of the Lord in a faithful though shadowed way, until at the last it will be revealed in total splendour" (*Lumen Gentium*, 8).

To you, dear Catholics of China, Divine Providence has entrusted the task of living the faith in the midst of a people of ancient cultural traditions. You are called to be "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world", "that all may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Mt. 5:16). Keep your gaze fixed then on "Christ, the light of the nations". Do not be

afraid: he has overcome the world (cf. Jn. 16:33), he is with you always (cf. Mt. 28:20).

Your witness will be all the more eloquent if it is expressed in words and deeds of love. Jesus said so: "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn. 13:35). Love among yourselves, first of all, but love also for all your Chinese brothers and sisters: a love which consists of understanding, respect, forbearance, forgiveness and reconciliation within the Christian community; a love which involves service, self-sacrifice, fidelity, hard work, honesty and justice in society as a whole.

Genuine love however cannot be separated from truth. Saint Paul reminds the Ephesians to: "live by the truth and in love" (Eph. 4:15). Dear brothers and sisters, the profound unity which marks every Catholic community throughout the world must be based on the truth which shines forth in the Gospel and on the charity which is born of the heart of Christ. This must also be the case with you! Every day I pray for you, asking the Lord to help you remain united as living members of the one Mystical Body of Christ.

Unity is not the result of human policies or hidden and mysterious intentions. Instead, unity springs from conversion of the heart, and from sincere acceptance of the unchanging principles laid down by Christ for his Church. Particularly important among these principles is the effective communion of all the parts of the Church with her visible foundation: Peter, the Rock. Consequently, a Catholic who wishes to remain such and to be recognized as such, cannot reject the principle of communion with the Successor of Peter.

How many testimonies of faith, how many messages of fidelity I have received from communities throughout China! Bishops, priests, Religious and lay people have wished to reaffirm their unshakable and full communion with Peter and the rest of the Church. As Pastor of the Universal Church, my heart greatly rejoices at this. I earnestly invite you all to seek paths to communion and reconciliation, paths which draw their light and inspiration from the Truth himself: Jesus Christ.

I entrust all of you to the maternal protection of Mary, Queen of China.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.