

APOSTOLIC VISIT  
OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI  
TO THE CZECH REPUBLIC  
(SEPTEMBER 26-28, 2009)

**MESSAGE TO YOUNG PEOPLE**

***ADDRESS THE HOLY FATHER***

*Esplanade on the Way to Melnik, Stará Boleslav  
Monday, 28 September 2009*

*Dear Young Friends,*

At the conclusion of this celebration I turn to you directly and I greet you warmly. You have come here in great numbers from all over the country and from neighbouring countries; you camped here yesterday evening and you spent the night in tents, sharing an experience of faith and companionship. Thank you for your presence here, which gives me a sense of the enthusiasm and generosity so characteristic of youth. Being with you makes the Pope feel young! I extend a particular word of thanks to your representative for his words.

Dear friends, it is not hard to see that in every young person there is an aspiration towards happiness, sometimes tinged with anxiety: an aspiration that is often exploited, however, by present-day consumerist society in false and alienating ways. Instead, that longing for happiness must be taken seriously, it demands a true and comprehensive response. At your age, the first major choices are made, choices that can set your lives on a particular course, for better or worse. Unfortunately, many of your contemporaries allow themselves to be led astray by illusory visions of spurious happiness, and then they find themselves sad and alone. Yet there are also many young men and women who seek to transform doctrine into action, as your representative said, so as to give the fullness of meaning to their lives. I invite you all to consider the experience of Saint Augustine, who said that the heart of every person is restless until it finds what it truly seeks. And he discovered that Jesus Christ alone is the answer that can satisfy his and every person's desire for a life of happiness, filled with meaning and value (cf. *Confessions*, I.1.1).

As he did with Augustine, so the Lord comes to meet each one of you. He knocks at the door of your freedom and asks to be welcomed as a friend. He wants to make you happy, to fill you with humanity and dignity. The Christian faith is this: encounter with Christ, the living Person who gives life a new horizon and thereby a definitive direction. And when the heart of a young person opens up to his divine plans, it is not difficult to recognize and follow his voice. The Lord calls each of us by name, and entrusts to us a

specific mission in the Church and in society. Dear young people, be aware that by Baptism you have become children of God and members of his Body, the Church. Jesus constantly renews his invitation to you to be his disciples and his witnesses. Many of you he calls to marriage, and the preparation for this Sacrament constitutes a real vocational journey. Consider seriously the divine call to raise a Christian family, and let your youth be the time in which to build your future with a sense of responsibility. Society needs Christian families, saintly families!

And if the Lord is calling you to follow him in the ministerial priesthood or in the consecrated life, do not hesitate to respond to his invitation. In particular, in this Year of Priests, I appeal to you, young men: be attentive and open to Jesus's call to offer your lives in the service of God and his people. The Church in every country, including this one, needs many holy priests and also persons fully consecrated to the service of Christ, Hope of the world.

Hope! This word, to which I often return, sits well with youth. You, my dear young people, are the hope of the Church! She expects you to become messengers of hope, as happened last year in Australia, during World Youth Day, that great manifestation of youthful faith that I was able to experience personally, and in which some of you took part. Many more of you will be able to come to Madrid in August 2011. I invite you here and now to participate in this great gathering of young people with Christ in the Church.

Dear friends, thank you again for being here and thank you for your gift: the book of photographs recounting the lives of young people in your dioceses. Thank you also for the sign of your solidarity towards the young people of Africa, which you have presented to me. The Pope asks you to live your faith with joy and enthusiasm; to grow in unity among yourselves and with Christ; to pray and to be diligent in frequenting the sacraments, especially the Eucharist and Confession; to take seriously your Christian formation, remaining ever obedient to the teachings of your Pastors. May Saint Wenceslaus guide you along this path through his example and his intercession, and may you always enjoy the protection of the Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus and our Mother. I bless all of you with affection!

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So srdca vítam pútnikov zo Slovenska, osobitne mladých. Milí mladí, bratia a sestry, ďakujem sa vašu účasť na dnešnom slávení. Nezapúdajte: Božia láska je vašou silou! Ochoťne žehnám vás i vašich drahých. Pochválený buď Ježiš Kristus!

*[I extend a warm welcome to the pilgrims who have come from Slovakia, especially the young people. Dear young people, dear brothers and sisters, I thank you for your presence at today's celebration. Do not forget: let the love of God be your strength! I gladly bless you and your loved ones. May Jesus Christ be praised!]*

Słowa pozdrowienia kieruję do obecnych tu Polaków, szczególnie do młodych, którzy towarzyszą braciom Czechom w duchu żywej przyjaźni. Wspierajcie się wzajemnie

radosnym świadectwem wiary, abyście wzrastali w miłości Chrystusa i w mocy Ducha Świętego ku pełni waszego człowieczeństwa i ku świętości! Niech Bóg wam błogosławi!

*[I address a word of greeting to the Poles here present, and especially to the young who have come to join their Czech brothers and sisters in a spirit of warm friendship. Support one another by a joyful testimony of faith, growing in Christ's love and in the power of the Holy Spirit, so as to reach the fullness of humanity and holiness. May God bless you!]*

Ganz herzlich grüße ich die Jugendlichen und alle Pilger aus den deutschsprachigen Nachbarländern. Danke für euer Kommen! Eure Teilnahme an diesem Fest des Glaubens und der Hoffnung ist ein Zeichen dafür, daß ihr in Jesus Christus und in der Gemeinschaft der Kirche die Antworten auf eure Fragen und inneren Wünsche sucht. Christus selbst ist der Weg, die Wahrheit und das Leben (vgl. Joh 14,6). Er ist der Grund, der wirklich unser Leben trägt. Auf diesem Fundament können christliche Familien entstehen und junge Menschen auf ihre Berufung zum Priester und zum geweihten Leben antworten. Die persönliche Freundschaft mit Christus erfüllt uns mit echter, bleibender Freude und macht uns bereit, Gottes Plan für unser Leben zu verwirklichen. Dazu erbitte ich euch allen den Beistand des Heiligen Geistes.

*[I offer warm greetings to the young people and to all the pilgrims who have come from neighbouring German-speaking countries. Thank you for your presence! Your participation in this feast of faith and hope is a sign that you are seeking answers to your questions and inner desires in Jesus Christ and in the community of the Church. Christ himself is the way, the truth and the life (cf. Jn 14:6). He is the foundation that truly supports our life. On this firm basis, Christian families can be raised and young people can respond to their vocation to the priesthood and the consecrated life. Personal friendship with Christ fills us with genuine, lasting joy and makes us ready to put into effect God's plan for our life. To this end, I invoke upon all of you the assistance of the Holy Spirit.]*

Milovaní mladí přátelé, vaše nadšení pro křesťanskou víru je znamením naděje pro církev žijící a působící v těchto zemích. Abyste dali plnější smysl svému mládí, následujte odvážně a štědře Pána Ježíše, který klepe na dveře vašeho srdce. Kristus od vás žádá, abyste jej přijali jako přítele. Necht' vám Pán žehná a naplní každý váš dobrý životní plán!

*[Dear young friends, your enthusiasm for the Christian faith is a sign of hope for the Church that is present and active in these lands. In order to give a fuller meaning to your youth, follow the Lord Jesus with courage and generosity as he knocks on the door of your hearts. Christ asks you to welcome him as a friend. May the Lord bless you and bring to fulfilment every good plan that you make for your lives!]*