

Selections from the Letter of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, to the Youth of the World

Since the human person is the fundamental and at the same time the daily way of the Church, it is easy to understand why the Church attributes special importance to the period of youth as a key stage in the life of every human being. You young people are the ones who embody this youth: you are the youth of the nations and societies, the youth of every family and of all humanity; you are also the youth of the Church. We are all looking to you, for all of us, thanks to you, in a certain sense continually become young again. So your youth is not just your own property: it belongs to the whole of that space that every man traverses in his life's journey, and at the same time it is a special possession belonging to everyone.

In you there is hope, for you belong to the future, just as the future belongs to you. For hope is always linked to the future; it is the expectation of "future good things". As a Christian virtue, it is linked to the expectation of those eternal good things which God has promised to man in Jesus Christ. And at the same time, this hope, as both a Christian and a human virtue, is the expectation of the good things which man will build, using the talents given him by Providence.

In this sense the future belongs to you young people, just as it once belonged to the generation of those who are now adults, and precisely together with them it has become the present reality. Responsibility for this present reality and for its shape and many different forms lies first of all with adults. To you belongs responsibility for what will one day become reality together with yourselves, but which still lies in the future.

When we say that the future belongs to you, we are thinking in categories of human impermanence, which is always a journey towards the future. When we say that the future depends on you, we are thinking in ethical categories, according to the demands of moral

responsibility, which requires us to attribute to man as a person—and to the communities and societies which are made up of persons—the fundamental value of human acts and intentions.

This dimension is also a dimension proper to Christian and human hope. And in this dimension the first and principal wish that the Church expresses for you young people: that you should “always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you”.

These words, once written by the Apostle Peter to the first generation of Christians, have a relationship with the whole of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Perhaps we shall see this relationship more clearly when we meditate upon Christ's conversation with the young man, recorded by the Evangelists.

To the question: “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”, Jesus replies first with the question: “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone”. Then he goes on: “You know the commandments: ‘Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honour your father and mother’”. With these words Jesus reminds his questioner of some of the main commandments of the Decalogue.

But the conversation does not end here. For the young man declares: “Teacher, all these things I have observed from my youth”. Then, writes the Evangelist, “Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said to him, ‘You lack one thing; go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me’”.

At this point the atmosphere of the meeting changes. The Evangelist writes that “at that saying his countenance fell, and he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions.”

There are still other Gospel passages in which Jesus of Nazareth meets young people—but we can say without hesitation that the conversation mentioned above is the meeting which is the most complete and richest in content. It can also be said that this meeting has a more universal and timeless character, in other words that in a certain sense it holds good constantly and continually, throughout the centuries and generations. Christ speaks in this way to a young person, a boy or a girl; his conversation takes place in different parts of the world, in the midst of the different nations, races and cultures. Each of you is potentially the one he will speak to.

At the same time, all the elements of the description and all the words uttered in that conversation by both sides have a significance which is absolutely essential, and have a specific weight. One can say that these words contain a particularly profound truth about man in general, and, above all, about youth.

We shall begin from what we find at the end of the Gospel text. The young man goes away sorrowful, “for he had great possessions”.

There is no doubt that this expression refers to the material possessions of which the young man was owner or heir. Perhaps this is the situation of some, but it is not typical. And therefore the Evangelist’s words suggest another way of putting the matter: it is a question of the fact that youth is in itself (independently of any material goods) a special treasure of man, of a young man or woman, and most often it is lived by young people as a specific treasure.

The treasure which is youth reveals itself in precisely this shape or form: the treasure of discovering and at the same time of organizing, choosing, foreseeing and making the first personal decisions, decisions that will be important for the future in the strictly personal dimension of human existence. At the same time, these decisions are of considerable social

importance. The young man in the Gospel was precisely in this existential phase, as we can deduce from the questions he asks in his conversation with Jesus. Therefore also the final words about “great possessions” —meaning wealth—can be understood in this sense: the treasure which is youth itself.

But we must ask the question: does this treasure of youth necessarily alienate man from Christ? The Evangelist certainly does not say this: rather, an examination of the text leads us to a different conclusion. The decision to go away from Christ was definitively influenced only by external riches, what the young man possessed. Not by what he was! What he was, as precisely a young man—the interior treasure hidden in youth—had led him to Jesus. And it had also impelled him to ask those questions which in the clearest way concern the plan for the whole of life. What must I do? “What must I do to inherit eternal life?”. What must I do so that my life may have full value and full meaning?

The youth of each one of you, dear friends, is a treasure that is manifested precisely in these questions. Man asks himself these questions throughout his life. But in the time of youth they are particularly urgent, indeed insistent. And it is good that this is so. These questions show the dynamism of the development of the human personality, the dynamism which is proper to your age. You ask yourselves these questions sometimes with impatience, and at the same time you yourselves understand that the reply to them cannot be hurried or superficial; the reply must have a specific and definitive weight. It is a question here of a reply that concerns the whole of life.

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Christ replies to the young man in the Gospel. He says: “No one is good but God alone”. We have already heard what the young man had asked: “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit

eternal life?”. How must I act so that my life will have meaning and value? We could translate his question into the language of our own times. In this context Christ's answer means this: only God is the ultimate basis of all values; only he gives the definitive meaning to our human existence.

Only God is good, which means this: in him and him alone all values have their first source and final completion; he is “the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end”. Only in him do values and their authenticity and definitive confirmation. Without him—without the reference to God—the whole world of created values remains as it were suspended in an absolute vacuum. It also loses its transparency, its expressiveness. Evil is put forward as a good and good itself is rejected.

Why is God alone good? Because he is love. Christ gives this answer in the words of the Gospel, and above all by the witness of his own life and death: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son”. God is good precisely because he “is love”.

As we have said, the question about the value of life, about the meaning of life, forms part of the singular treasure of youth. It comes from the very heart of the riches and the anxieties linked with that plan for life that must be undertaken and carried out. Still more so, when youth is tested by personal suffering, or is profoundly aware of the suffering of others; when it experiences a powerful shock at the sight of the many kinds of evil that exist in the world; finally, when it comes face to face with the mystery of sin, of human iniquity. Christ's reply is this: “Only God is good”; only God is love. This reply may seem difficult, but at the same time it is firm and it is true; it bears within itself the definitive solution. How I pray that you, my young friends, will hear Christ's reply in the most personal way possible; accept it and undertake its accomplishment!

Such is Christ in the conversation with the young man. Such is Christ in the conversation with each of you. When you say: “Good Teacher”, he asks: “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone”. And therefore: the fact that I am good bears witness to God. “He who has seen me has seen the Father”. Thus speaks Christ, the teacher and friend, Christ crucified and risen: always the same yesterday and today and forever.

This is the kernel, the essential point of the reply to these questions which you young people put to him through the treasure which is within you, which is rooted in your youth. Your youth opens different prospects before you; it offers you as a task the plan for the whole of your lives. Hence the question about values; hence the question about the meaning of life, about truth, about good and evil. When Christ in his reply to you tells you to refer all this to God, at the same time he shows you what the source and foundation of this is in yourselves. For each one of you is the image and likeness of God through the very act of creation. Precisely this image and likeness makes you pose the questions that you must ask yourselves. These questions show how man without God cannot understand himself and cannot fulfil himself. Jesus Christ came into the world first of all in order to make each one of us aware of this. Without him this fundamental dimension of the truth about man would easily sink into obscurity. However, “the light has come into the world”, “and the darkness has not overcome it”.

What must I do so that my life may have value, have meaning? This earnest question comes from the lips of the young man in the Gospel in the following form: “What must I do to inherit eternal life?”. Is a person who puts the question in this form speaking a language still intelligible to the people of today? Are we not the generation whose horizon of existence is completely filled by the world and temporal progress? We think primarily in earthly categories. If we go beyond the

limits of our planet, we do so in order to launch interplanetary flights, transmit signals to the other planets and send cosmic probes in their direction.

All this has become the content of our modern civilization. Science together with technology has discovered in an incomparable way man's possibilities with regard to matter, and even in dominating the interior world of his thoughts, capacities, tendencies and passions.

But at the same time it is clear that, when we place ourselves in the presence of Christ, when he becomes the confidant of the questionings of our youth, we cannot put the question differently from how that young man put it: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?". Any other question about the meaning and value of our life would be, in the presence of Christ, insufficient and unessential.

For Christ is not only the "good teacher" who shows the paths of life on earth. He is the witness to that definitive destiny which the human person has in God himself. He is the witness to man's immortality. The Gospel which he proclaimed with his lips is definitively sealed by the Cross and the Resurrection in the Paschal Mystery. "Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him".

And so, dear brothers and dear sisters, if you wish to talk to Christ and to accept all the truth of his testimony, you must make up your mind to ask the question about eternal life. For, "the form of this world is passing away", and each of us is subject to this passing. Man is born with the prospect of the day of his death in the dimension of the visible world; at the same time, man, whose interior reason for existence is to go beyond himself, also bears within himself everything whereby he goes beyond the world.

Everything whereby man, in himself, goes beyond the world—though he is rooted in it—is explained by the image and likeness of God which is inscribed in humanity from the beginning. And everything whereby man goes beyond the world not only justifies the question about eternal life but in fact makes it indispensable. This is the question that people have long been asking themselves, not only in the sphere of Christianity but also outside it. You too must find the courage to ask it, like the young man in the Gospel. Christianity teaches us to understand temporal existence from the perspective of the Kingdom of God, from the perspective of eternal life. Without eternal life, temporal existence, however rich, however highly developed in all aspects, in the end brings man nothing other than the ineluctable necessity of death.

Now there is an opposition between youth and death. Death seems far distant from youth. And it is. But since youth means the plan for the whole of life—the plan drawn up in accordance with the criterion of meaning and value, during youth it is essential to ask the question about the end. Human experience left to itself says the same as Sacred Scripture: “It is appointed for men to die once.” The inspired writer adds: “And after that comes judgment.” And Christ says: “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.” So ask Christ, like the young man in the Gospel: “What must I do to inherit eternal life?”.

To this question Jesus replies: “You know the commandments”, and he immediately lists these commandments, which form part of the Decalogue. Moses received them one day on Mount Sinai, at the moment of the Covenant of God with Israel. They were written on tablets of stone and for every Israelite were the daily indication of the path to be taken. The young man who speaks to Christ naturally knows by heart the commandments of the Decalogue; indeed, he can declare with joy: “All these things I have observed from my youth”.

We have to presuppose that in the dialogue which Christ develops with each one of you the same question is repeated: “Do you know the commandments?” It will be infallibly repeated, because the commandments form part of the Covenant between God and humanity. The commandments determine the essential bases of behavior, decide the moral value of human acts, and remain in organic relationship with man's vocation to eternal life, with the establishment of God's Kingdom in people and among people. In the words of divine Revelation is inscribed the clear code of morality, of which the tablets of the Decalogue of Mount Sinai remain the key-point, and the culmination of which is found in the Gospel: in the Sermon on the Mount and in the commandment of love.

At the same time this code of morality is written in yet another form. It is inscribed in the moral conscience of humanity, in such a way that those who do not know the commandments, in other words the law revealed by God, “are a law to themselves.” Thus writes Saint Paul in his Letter to the Romans, and he immediately adds: “They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness.”

Here we touch upon matters of supreme importance for your youth and for that plan of life that emerges from it.

This plan accepts the prospect of eternal life first of all through the truth of the deeds on which it will be built. This truth of deeds has its foundation in that twofold presentation of the moral law: the one written on the tablets of the Decalogue of Moses and in the Gospel, and the one inscribed in man's moral conscience. And the conscience “presents itself as a witness” to that law, as Saint Paul writes. This conscience—in the words of the Letter to the Romans—is the “conflicting thoughts” which “accuse or perhaps excuse them”. Everyone knows how closely these words correspond to our interior reality: each of us from our youth experiences the voice of conscience.

Therefore when Jesus, in his conversation with the young man, lists the commandments: “Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honour your father and mother”, the upright conscience responds with an interior reaction to man’s corresponding deeds: it accuses or excuses. But the conscience must not be distorted; the fundamental formulation of the principles of morality must not surrender to deformation by any kind of relativism or utilitarianism.

Dear young friends! The response which Jesus gives to his questioner in the Gospel is addressed to each one of you. Christ asks you about the state of your moral awareness, and at the same time he questions you about the state of your conscience. This is a key question for man: it is the fundamental question of your youth, one that concerns the whole plan of life which must be formed precisely in youth. Its value is the one most clearly connected with the relationship of each of you with moral good and evil. The value of this plan depends in an essential way on the authenticity and rectitude of your conscience. It also depends on its sensitivity.

So we find ourselves here at a crucial moment, when at every step time and eternity meet at a level which is proper to man. It is the level of the conscience, the level of moral values: the conscience is the most important dimension of time and history. For history is written not only by the events which in a certain sense happen “from outside”; it is written first of all “from within”: it is the history of human consciences, of moral victories and defeats. Here too the essential greatness of man finds its foundation: his authentically human dignity. This is that interior treasure whereby man continually goes beyond himself in the direction of eternity. If it is true that “it is established that people would die only once”, it is also true that man carries with him the treasure of conscience, the deposit of good and evil, across the frontier of death, in order

that, in the sight of him who is holiness itself, he may find the ultimate and definitive truth about his whole life: “after that comes judgment.”

This is just what happens in the conscience: in the interior truth of our acts, in a certain sense, there is constantly present the dimension of eternal life. And simultaneously the same conscience, through moral values, imprints the most expressive seal upon the life of the generations, upon the history and culture of human environments, societies, nations and of all humanity.

In this field how much depends on each one of you!

Continuing our examination of Christ's conversation with the young man, we now enter another phase. It is a new and decisive one. The young man has received the essential and fundamental response to the question: “What must I do to inherit eternal life?”, and this response coincides with the whole journey of his life up to this point: “All these I have observed from my youth”. How ardently I hope that the journey of the life of each one of you up to this point has similarly coincided with Christ's response! Indeed, it is my hope that your youth will provide you with a sturdy basis of sound principles, that your conscience will attain in these years of your youth that mature clear-sightedness that during your whole lives will enable each one of you to remain always a “person of conscience”, a “person of principles”, a “person who inspires trust”, in other words, a person who is credible. The moral personality formed in this way constitutes the most important contribution that you can make to the life in the community, to the family, to society, to professional activity and also to cultural and political activity, and finally to the community of the Church-to all those spheres with which you are already or will one day be connected.

It is a question here of a full and profound human authenticity and of an equal authenticity of the development of the human personality, female or male, with all the characteristics which make up the unrepeatable features of this personality, and which at the same time and in different ways have an impact on the life of the community and of the various environments, beginning with the family. Each one of you must in some way contribute to the richness of these communities, first of all by means of what he or she is. Is it not in this direction that the youth which is the “personal” treasure of each of you tends? Man sees himself, his own humanity, both as his own interior world and as the specific area of his being “with others”, “for others”.

Precisely here the commandments of the Decalogue and of the Gospel take on a decisive meaning, especially the commandment of love which opens the human person to God and neighbor. For charity is the “bond of perfection”. Through charity, man and human fraternity come to fuller maturity. For this reason, love is the greatest and the first of all the commandments, as Christ teaches; and in it all the others are included and made one.

My wish for each of you therefore is that the paths of your youth may meet in Christ, that you may be able to confirm before him, by the witness of your consciences, this evangelical moral code, to the values of which so many individuals of noble spirit have in the course of the generations in some way drawn near.

This is not the appropriate place for quoting the confirmations of this fact which run through the whole history of humanity. What is certain is that from the most ancient times the dictate of conscience has guided every human subject towards an objective moral norm which finds concrete expression in respect for the other person and in the principle of not doing to that person what one would not wish done to oneself.

Here we see already clearly emerging that objective morality of which Saint Paul declares that it is “written on their hearts” and that “their consciences also bear witness” to it. The Christian readily perceives in it a ray from the creating Word that enlightens every man; and precisely because he is a follower of that Word made flesh he rises to the higher law of the Gospel which positively imposes upon him-in the commandment of love-the duty to do to neighbor all the good that he would wish to be done to himself. He thus seals the inner voice of conscience with absolute acceptance of Christ and his word.

It is also my hope that, after you have made the discernment of the essential and important questions for your youth, for the plan of the whole life that lies before you, you will experience what the Gospel means when it says: “Jesus, looking upon him, loved him”. May you experience a look like that! May you experience the truth that he, Christ, looks upon you with love!

He looks with love upon every human being. The Gospel confirms this at every step. One can also say that this “loving look” of Christ contains, as it were, a summary and synthesis of the entire Good News. If we would seek the beginning of this look, we must turn back to the Book of Genesis, to that instant when, after the creation of man “male and female”, God saw that “it was very good”. That very first look of the Creator is reflected in the look of Christ which accompanies his conversation with the young man in the Gospel.

We know that Christ will confirm and seal this look with the redemptive Sacrifice of the Cross, because precisely by means of this Sacrifice that “look” reached a particular depth of love. In it is contained an affirmation of man and of humanity such as only he is capable of-Christ the Redeemer and Bridegroom. Only he “knows what is in every man”: he knows man’s weakness, but he also and above all knows his dignity.

My wish for each of you is that you may discover this look of Christ, and experience it in all its depth. I do not know at what moment in your life. I think that it will happen when you need it most: perhaps in suffering, perhaps together with the witness of a pure conscience, as in the case of that young man in the Gospel, or perhaps precisely in an opposite situation: together with the sense of guilt, with remorse of conscience. For Christ looked at Peter too in the hour of his fall: when he had three times denied his Master.

Man needs this loving look. He needs to know that he is loved, loved eternally and chosen from eternity. At the same time, this eternal love of divine election accompanies man during life as Christ's look of love. And perhaps most powerfully at the moment of trial, humiliation, persecution, defeat, when our humanity is as it were blotted out in the eyes of other people. At that moment the awareness that the Father has always loved us in his Son, that Christ always loves each of us, becomes a solid support for our whole human existence. When everything would make us doubt ourselves and the meaning of our life, then this look of Christ, the awareness of the love that in him has shown itself more powerful than any evil and destruction, this awareness enables us to survive.

My wish for you then is that you may experience what the young man in the Gospel experienced: “Jesus, looking upon him, loved him”.

From an examination of the Gospel text we see that this look was, so to speak, Christ's response to the testimony which the young man had given of his life up to that moment, of having acted according to God's commandments: “All these I have observed from my youth”.

At the same time, this “look of love” was the introduction to the concluding phase of the conversation. In Matthew's account, it was the young man himself who opened this phase, since

not only did he declare the personal fidelity to the commandments of the Decalogue which had marked all his previous conduct, but at the same time he asked a new question. In fact he asked: “What do I still lack?”.

This question is a very important one. It shows that in the moral conscience of a person and more precisely of a young person who is forming the plan for his or her whole life, there is hidden an aspiration to “something more”. This aspiration makes itself felt in various ways, but it is in the Gospel that the aspiration to perfection, to “something more”, finds its explicit point of reference. In the Sermon on the Mount Christ confirms the whole moral law, at the centre of which are the Mosaic tablets of the Ten Commandments. But at the same time he confers upon these commandments a new, evangelical meaning. And, as we have already said, it is all concentrated around love, not only as a commandment but also as a gift: “The love of Christ has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us”.

In this new context one also comes to understand the programme of the eight Beatitudes which begins the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew’s Gospel.

In this same context, the series of commandments which constitute the fundamental code of Christian morality is completed by the series of evangelical counsels, which in a special way express and make concrete Christ’s call to perfection, which is a call to holiness.

When the young man asks about the “more”: “What do I still lack?”, Jesus looks upon him with love, and this love finds here a new meaning. Man is carried interiorly, by the hand of the Holy Spirit, from a life according to the commandments to a life in the awareness of the gift, and Christ’s loving look expresses this interior “transition”. And Jesus says: “If you would be perfect,

go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”

Yes, my dear young friends! The Christian is capable of living in the dimension of gift. Indeed, this dimension is not only “higher” than the dimension of mere moral obligations known from the commandments but it is also “deeper” and more fundamental. It bears witness to a fuller expression of that plan of life which we begin to construct in our youth. The dimension of gift also creates the mature outline of every human and Christian vocation.

Allow me to conclude by recalling the words with which the Gospel speaks about the youthful years of Jesus of Nazareth. These words are brief, even though they cover the period of thirty years which he spent in the family home, with Mary and with Joseph the carpenter. The Evangelist Luke writes: “And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man”.

Youth, then, is “growth”. In the light of all that has been said so far on this theme, this Gospel passage strikes one as particularly evocative. Growth “in stature” refers to an individual’s natural relationship with time: this growth is as it were an “upward” stage in the course of a person’s life. It is the time of psychophysical development: the growth of all the energies through which normal human individuality is built up. But this process has to be accompanied by “growth” in wisdom and grace.

For all of you, dear young friends, I wish just such “growth”. One can say that youth is youth precisely through that growth. In this way youth acquires its own unrepeatable character.

Youth should be a process of “growth” bringing with the gradual accumulation of all that is true, good and beautiful, even when this growth is linked “from outside” to suffering, the loss of loved

ones, and the whole experience of evil that constantly makes itself felt in the world in which we live.

Youth should be “growth”. For this purpose, contact with the visible world, with nature, is of immense importance. In one's youth, this relationship to the visible world is enriching in a way that differs from knowledge of the world “obtained from books”. It enriches us in a direct way. One could say that by being in contact with nature we absorb into our own human existence the very mystery of creation which reveals itself to us through the untold wealth and variety of visible beings, and which at the same time is always beckoning us towards what is hidden and invisible. It is good for people to read this wonderful book—the “book of nature”, which lies open for each one of us. What the youthful mind and heart read in this book seems to be in perfect harmony with the exhortation to wisdom: “Acquire wisdom, acquire insight... Do not forsake her and she will keep you; love her and she will guard you”.

I likewise hope that this “growth” will come about through contact with the achievements of humanity, and still more through contact with living people. Being young should enable you to “increase in wisdom” through this contact. For youth is the time for new contacts, new companionships and friendships, in a circle wider than the family alone. There unfolds before us the vast field of experience, which is important not only in regard to knowledge but also in relation to education and ethics. This whole youthful experience will be useful to the extent that it gives you the ability to make critical judgments and above all the capacity of discernment in all things human. Your youthful experience will be blessed, you will gradually learn from it that essential truth concerning man—the truth that: “Man, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself”.

In this way therefore we learn to know other human beings, in order to become more fully human through our capacity for “self-giving”: for becoming men and women “for others”. This truth about man—this anthropology—has its incomparable culmination in Jesus of Nazareth. Hence the great importance of his young years, when he “increased in wisdom... and in favour before God and man”.

My wish for you too is a similar “growth” through contact with God. For this purpose, contact with nature and with other people can help indirectly, but the special and direct means is prayer. Pray and learn to pray! Open your hearts and your consciences to the one who knows you better than you know yourselves. Talk to him! Deepen your knowledge of the word of the Living God by reading and meditating on the Scriptures.

These are the methods and means for coming close to God and making contact with him. Remember that it is a question of a two- way relationship. God responds also with the most “free gift of self”, a gift which in biblical language is called “grace”. Strive to live in the grace of God!

So, my young friends, I hand you this Letter which continues the Gospel conversation of Christ with the young man on Palm Sunday, the day on which I am meeting many of you, pilgrims in Saint Peter’s Square, here in Rome. Precisely on this day the Bishop of Rome prays together with you for all the young people of the world, for each and every one.

And as we pray, in the great community of the young people of the universal Church and of all the Churches, we have before our eyes the image of Mary, who accompanies Christ at the beginning of his mission among men. This is the Mary of Cana of Galilee, who intercedes for the young people, for the newly-married couple when at the marriage feast the wine for the guests

runs out. Then Christ's Mother says these words to those serving at the feast: "Do whatever he tells you". He, the Christ.

I repeat these words of the Mother of God and I address them to you, to each one of you young people: "Do whatever Christ tells you".

Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, on 31 March, Palm Sunday and the Sunday of the Lord's Passion, in the year 1985, the seventh of my Pontificate.

The full text of *Dilecti Amici* (*Letter to the Youth*) can be found here:

https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/1985/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_31031985_dilecti-amici.html