

# Be Apostles of Love

Following are excerpts from an address given by Pope John Paul II to young people at Norcia and others of the surrounding area struck last year by earthquake.

Beloved young people,

Now at the conclusion of this day, so intense and rich in deep emotions and interior joy, I am happy to meet you, young people of Calmerina and the whole of Umbria, together with those of you who have gathered here to strengthen your spirit in that generous dedication that you



jointly displayed immediately after the disastrous earthquake which struck these hard-working people last year. You bore at that time a luminous witness, all the more to be appreciated because it was a spontaneous expression springing from your dynamic and serene spirit of sacrifice and emulating in the work of assistance and solidarity the example of precocious maturity offered by the young Benedict whose mind — as St. Gregory the Pope says —

matured from childhood, anticipating age with virtues.

Inspired by such a resolution to cooperate in the good of the community and especially of those living in painful conditions of hardship, you set yourselves in the true light of the Christian humanism proposed and lived by the Saint of Norcia, and which can be summed up in true respect for man in every expression of his value, in efficacious love for him, especially when he reveals the countenance and the voice of suffering.

Accept therefore dear young people . . . of the various ecclesial groups, my affectionate greeting in this birthplace of St. Benedict and above all, my congratulations on what you have carried out with your youthful enthusiasm.

Your commitment of charity and altruism has found its place in the age-old course of the Benedictine message. The latter is valid and relevant today also because it is firmly attached to perennial values, which, were they ever to require new expression and verification, are such as to vivify and elevate the human experience at all times. This message must attract and win over also the young people of the present generation, who are often disappointed and confused in the maze of a hedonistic and permissive society.

In fact, also the sad times in which St. Benedict's spiritual experience found its place, were full of deep contradictions, ambiguous and utopian aspirations, vain resolutions of grandeur; those times too, were marked by desolate moral wretchedness, and very low living standards, under the impact of peoples in expansion, but still dominated by promptings of violence. The Saint of Norcia, however, nourished by the certainties of the faith, reasserted the power of a Christianity that taught moral dignity and spiritual freedom and was at the same time the architect of civilization.

As you have clearly experienced, the conquest of interior spaces, offers God his rightful place in the human spirit, all that commitment, in a word, which we could distinguish with the primacy of the command to pray, is absolutely not in conflict, but on the contrary brings relief and grants creative intuition to true openness to the social sphere, to daily duty deeply felt, to the living forces of work and culture; thus animating with fervent inspiration and spirit of service the great and agitated world of work.

What can I say to you in particular?

Continue, dear young people, with the witness you generously bear, because while it is in harmony with the values of Benedictine tradition, it is at the same time faithful to modern men, interpreting their deepest aspirations.

You have felt the urgent need of meeting the Absolute and therefore you have discovered the importance of in-

teriority, silence and meditation, to be able to grasp the definitive and reconciling meaning of your own existence. You have tasted the sweetness of prayer and of that ever renewed and persevering reconciliation of friendship with the Lord established in hearts by an existential attitude of humble and active obedience to the Heavenly Father. Place yourselves often before the interior Master, and those who represent him, in the attitude of the true disciple, who knows how to be silent and listen.

You, dear young people, have discovered charity and love, which are manifested in solicitude for your neighbor and in open dialogue with brother, respecting their dignity and being able for a diffusion of reciprocal contribution.

You love beauty which is the splendor of order and therefore mainly innocence of life and harmony of the spirit.

The powerful call of the Benedictine message to seek God and his will, to establish a social context permeated by brotherhood and order, takes on an extraordinary and topical note in regard to the very serious problem of terrorism in Italy.

The violence that is upsetting the social fabric of the Italian nation is not fortuitous: it is based on a precise program, it is born of the spirit of hate. The origin of violence is here; only here. People must not let themselves be deceived by other motivations. That is why it is so necessary for Christians to be able to discern this spirit, understand its intrinsic perversion and not let themselves be contaminated, so that they can withdraw themselves from the spiral of hate and not let themselves be taken in by its promptings. On the contrary be clear-sighted and generous apostles of love.

Dear young people, you have picked out the ideal and main values of St. Benedict's witness and, with the grace of God, you have undertaken to put them into practice in your lives. Continue to interpret them and embody them with courage, generosity and enthusiasm, convinced that the Lord himself is the only guarantor, as the Psalmist says, of a building with solid foundations, and therefore of a just and human future, a peaceful and productive society, and harmonious and brotherly order.



## Use one to save the other.

At home and work, there are lots of ways your phone can help you save gas.

For example, instead of driving all over town, use the Yellow Pages to locate the store which has exactly what you want. Or skip the trip altogether—order by phone and have your merchandise delivered.

Before you drive somewhere to visit, telephone ahead to make sure the people you want to see are there.

And use your phone to schedule several appointments along the route of a single trip.

Businesses can save by using the phone to hold meetings, replace sales calls, collect overdue bills, update inventory information, and get the job done just as effectively.

By getting more mileage from your telephone, you'll save time and money and ease up on the gas.

 **ROCHESTER TELEPHONE**  
Still the best way to get around.