

Message to the Guanellian Youth Movement

by Pope John Paul II

Dearest Young "Guanellians",

1. I send you a cordial greeting as you gather in Como from different Italian regions to take part in the [Italian] National Meeting of the *Guanelli Youth Movement*. This important event extends and deepens the experience you shared in 2000 with your peers from around the world at the unforgettable World Youth Day in Tor Vergata. Besides, your meeting these days is a step in the journey that gets you ready for the upcoming World Youth Day in Toronto, to which I certainly invite you.

2. Your convention in Como involves you in making you more familiar with the experience of two true disciples of the Lord: *Bl. Don Luigi Guanella* and *Bl. Sr Clare Bosatta*. Do not hesitate to learn in their school of holiness, and learn from their dedication to the last and the forsaken, guided by full and steadfast trust in Providence.

Fr Guanella and *Sr Clare* were so taken with Christ's charity that they lived deeply *solidarity with the suffering of the poor* whom they saw bearing the face of the Lord (cf. Mt 25,31-46). This message of sensitivity and attention to others is more than ever necessary in the contemporary world; it often risks drowning in selfishness and indifference and has a profound need of generous witnesses to the ideal of love and concern for others, especially our more harshly tested brothers and sisters.

This is a high and demanding ideal, but do not think that it is beyond your reach. Does not the secret of the "spiritual success" of *Luigi* and *Clare* consist in simplicity of life, supported by a solid spirituality made up of *diligent prayer* and *constant reference to the Eucharist*?

Dear friends, may I speak to you frankly on this topic: *without prayer it is not possible to succeed in the work of becoming holy!* Prayer opens us to the Other, to Jesus Christ; it forms us to see people and situations in the perspective of his love. In prayer, we strive to create within us the new man, created according to the heart of Christ.

3. *Draw your strength from the sacramental grace of the Eucharist*, that enables you to remain firmly anchored to God's will. Eucharistic devotion must shape your whole life, guide your decisions and inspire in you ideals of solidarity. It must help you live in communion with your brothers and sisters, starting with those who live beside you and reaching out to embrace in spirit every human being.

In this regard, I learned with pleasure that every first Saturday of the month you meet in the shrine of the Sacred Heart of this city for nocturnal adoration of the Eucharist. I congratulate you on this beautiful initiative that you also intend to practise together during this *meeting*. It is a strong witness in opposition to the current of the common mentality, because it proposes a unique "discoteque of silence", where you meet Jesus "heart to heart" and make the Eucharist the main inspiration in your basic life choices.

May Jesus in the Eucharist be increasingly *at the centre of your personal and community life*, in accordance with the personal intuition of *Bl. Don Luigi Guanella*: "He wants to speak to you, heart to heart".

I want to reaffirm to you what I entrusted to the young people at the Tor Vergata meeting: "Let the Eucharist mould your life and the life of the families you will form. Let it guide all life's choices. May the Eucharist ... inspire in you ideals of solidarity, and may it lead you to live in communion with your brothers and sisters in every part of the world" ([Mass for the Conclusion of World Youth Day 2000](#), 20 August 2000, n. 6; *ORE* 23 August 2000, p. 2).

4. The encounter with Jesus in prayer and in the Eucharist will bring new light to your lives and inspire you to be his witnesses among your peers. In this connection, I invite you to be *Gospel missionaries* in your daily activities. Take Jesus' word, a word of life and hope, to everyone, to those in difficulty who are in danger of losing the meaning and sense of worth of their own existence.

On this important occasion, I would like to renew to you the appeal I made to all the young people at Tor Vergata: accept the commitment to be *morning watchmen at the dawn of the new millennium*. This is a primary commitment, which keeps its validity and urgency as we begin this century with unfortunate dark clouds of violence and fear gathering on the horizon. Today, more than ever, we need people who live holy lives, watchmen who proclaim to the world a new dawn of hope, brotherhood and peace.

5. Dear friends, members of the *Guanelli Youth Movement*, persevere in the way you have begun with enthusiasm and generosity, in close communion with the ecclesial community. For everyone try to be "the salt of the earth and the light of the world" (cf. Mt 5,13-14): at school and at university, in the world of work and in sports, in the family and among your friends.

I entrust you to the motherly protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the faithful disciple of her Son Jesus and the example for all believers of unreserved submission to God's grace. I also invoke upon you the heavenly intercession of *Bl. Luigi Guanella* and *Bl. Clare Bosatta*, so that they may be with you during these days of meetings and throughout your spiritual journey.

With these reflections, I assure you of my closeness in prayer and I warmly bless you, along with the priests and leaders of your movement and all your friends.

From the Vatican, 20 April 2002

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