
THE LEGACY OF THE GREAT JUBILEE



After having introduced you the the letter of John Paul II on the new millennium, I would like to quote excerpts. In taking a few paragraphs from the first chapter, I invite you to join in his prayer of praise for this marvellous encounter with Christ, which constitutes the legacy of the Great Jubilee.

ONE UNINTERRUPTED HYMN

« ... I expressed the hope that the bimillennial celebration of the mystery of the Incarnation would be lived as “one unceasing hymn of praise to the Trinity” and also “as a journey of reconciliation and sign of true hope for all who look to Christ and to his Church.” And this Jubilee Year has been an experience of these essential aspects, reaching moments of intensity which have made us as it were touch with our hands the merciful presence of God, from whom comes “every good endowment and every perfect gift” (Jas 1:17) [...] My thoughts first turn to the duty of praise. This is the point of departure for every genuine response of faith to the revelation of God in Christ. Christianity is grace, it is the wonder of a God who is not satisfied with creating the world and man, but puts himself on the same level as the creature he has made and, after speaking on various occasions and in different ways through his prophets, “in these last days... has spoken to us by a Son” (Hb 1:1-2).

TODAY

«In these days! Yes, the Jubilee has made us realize that two thousand years of history have passed without diminishing the freshness of that “today”, when the angels proclaimed to the shepherds the marvellous event of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem: “For to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord” (Lk 2:11). Two thousand years have gone by, but Jesus’ proclamation of his mission, when he applied the prophecy of Isaiah to himself before his astonished fellow townspeople in the Synagogue of Nazareth, is as enduring as ever: “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (Lk 4:21). Two thousand years have gone by, but sinners in need of mercy – and who is not? – still experience the consolation of that “today” of salvation which on the Cross opened the gates of the Kingdom of God to the repentant thief: “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise” (Lk 23:43).

THE FULLNESS OF TIME

«The coincidence of this Jubilee with the opening of a new millennium has certainly helped people to become more aware of the mystery of Christ within the great horizon of the history of salvation. Christianity is a religion rooted in history! It was in the soil of history that God chose to establish a covenant with Israel and so prepare the birth of the Son from the womb of Mary “in the fullness of time” (Gal 4:4). Understood in his divine and human mystery, Christ is the foundation and centre of history, he is its meaning and ultimate goal. It is in fact through him, the Word and Image of the Father, that “all things were made” (Jn 1:3; Cf. Col 1:15). His incarnation, culminating in the Paschal Mystery and the gift of the Spirit, is the pulsating heart of time, the mysterious hour in which the Kingdom of God came to us (Cf. Mk 1:15), indeed took root in our history, as the seed destined to become a great tree (Cf. Mk 4:30-32).

THE PURIFICATION OF MEMORY

«To purify our vision for the contemplation of the mystery, this Jubilee Year has been strongly marked by the request for forgiveness. This is true not only for individuals, who have examined their own lives in order to ask for mercy and gain the special gift of the indulgence, but for the entire Church, which has decided to recall the infidelities of so many of her children in the course of history, infidelities which have cast a shadow over her countenance as the Bride of Christ. How can we forget the moving Liturgy of 12 March 2000 in Saint Peter's Basilica, at which, looking upon our Crucified Lord, I asked forgiveness in the name of the Church for the sins of all her children? This "purification of memory" has strengthened our steps for the journey towards the future and has made us more humble and vigilant in our acceptance of the Gospel.

EUCCHARISTIC CONGRESS

«In the spirit of the Jubilee Year the International Eucharistic Congress was intended to have special significance. And it did! Since the Eucharist is the sacrifice of Christ made present among us, how could this real presence not be at the centre of the Holy Year dedicated to the Incarnation of the Word? The year was intended, precisely for this reason, to be intensely Eucharistic, and that is how we tried to live it.

INTERNATIONAL DEBT

«The Jubilee was also a great event of charity – and it could not be otherwise. Already in the years of preparation, I had called for greater and more incisive attention to the problems of poverty which still beset the world. The problem of the international debt of poor countries took on particular significance in this context. I am happy to note that recently the Parliaments of many creditor States have voted a substantial remission of the bilateral debt of the poorest and most indebted countries. I hope that the respective governments will soon implement these parliamentary decisions.

NEW ENERGIES

«These are only some of the elements of the Jubilee celebration. It has left us with many memories. But if we ask what is the core of the great legacy it leaves us, I would not hesitate to describe it as the contemplation of the face of Christ: Christ considered in his historical features and in his mystery, Christ known through his manifold presence in the Church and in the world, and confessed as the meaning of history and the light of life's journey.» [Apostolic Letter translation by Zenit News Agency]

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