

GO OUT INTO THE DEEP

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Foundress

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Dear Brothers and Sisters:

In the Apostolic Letter at the closing of the New Year, *Novo Millennio Ineunte (At the beginning of a New Millennium)*, His Holiness, John Paul II tells us in his first lines that, after having lived such an intense experience of grace and mercy like the Jubilee Year, we now find resounding in our hearts the words of Jesus which invite the Apostle Peter to "go out into the deep" in order to catch fish. Peter and the other apostles confided in the word of Christ and let down their nets. "And having done so, they caught an enormous amount of fish" (Luke 5:4).



The Holy Father has told us repeatedly that the Jubilee Year was one of abundant grace, mercy and salvation, that Christ has opened His Heart wide in order to pour forth abundantly graces of salvation upon the Church and upon humanity. In this Apostolic Letter he clearly reveals his sentiment: "It is impossible to measure the effusion of grace which, all throughout the year, has touched conscience. Clearly a river of living water, that flows constantly from the Lamb, has been poured upon the Church. It is the water of the Holy Spirit which quenches our thirst and renews us... That is why I feel the obligation of directing myself to you. What has occurred requires that we consider it and, also, in a certain sense, that we interpret it, so as to hear what the Holy Spirit, throughout this year, has said and says to the Church" (cf. 1-2).

Yes, my brothers and sisters, what has occurred demands a profound time of prayer and serious reflection from each one of us, so that we can consider what the Holy Spirit has told us and poured forth in such a particular and plentiful manner in this Jubilee Year.

What has the Holy Spirit done and said at the beginning of this new millennium? He said: "Go out into the deep." The hour has come to let down the nets and to take in a great multitude of fish! Upon the Church a river of living water has been poured, and this water bathes, cleanses, and heals all impurity and has the life-giving strength that makes all it touches fertile. Is this not the prophecy of Ezekiel 47:8-12?

"These waters go out toward the eastern region and go down into the sea, being made to flow into the sea, and the waters of the sea become fresh. It will come about that every living creature which swarms in every place where the river goes will live. And there will be very many fish, for these waters go there and the others become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes. And it will come about that, by the river on its bank, on one side and on the other, will grow all kinds of trees for food, their leaves will not wither and their fruit will not fail. They will bear every month because their water flows from the sanctuary, and their fruit will be for food and their leaves for healing." (cf. 47:8-12)

The Pierced Heart of Jesus has opened itself wide in order to pour forth His Blood and His Water. Grace has already been poured out; now it is only necessary to cooperate actively in the transformation of our hearts in order to live an authentic life of holiness and to go forward in mission with generosity and ardor.

I believe that Holiness and Mission will be the oars Peter's ship will use to go out into the deep to take in the miraculous catch of fish. Both, moving harmoniously, will lead the ship forward. Both will enable the Church to shine in the world as a torch of faith, hope and love. Both will open new paths through which the Church will go forward to encounter man, to encounter hearts that are restless and often disoriented, to encounter his needs, his desires, his struggles, his doubts and fears. Both oars ought to direct the ship of the Church to the Third Millennium with confidence, determination and promptness amidst the great waves that threaten it.

We have seen a great river being poured upon the Church. The Holy Spirit has come upon the Church as it did in Pentecost in order to change hearts of stone into hearts of flesh, in order to transform lives, to heal our blindness, to free the oppressed and to lift up the paralytic. The Holy Spirit has come upon us as in Pentecost in order to distribute charisms, to anoint with power, to give joy and enthusiasm for the Gospel, to remove fear of the world's persecution, and to usher us forward with a new love and a new ardor in our mission of evangelization. The Spirit has come upon us to lead us to a life of holiness and to usher us forward on our mission.

The hour has come to go out into the deep. The hour has come and we need to be punctual. The Church as a whole and each one of us individually have received this call at the beginning of the Third Millennium. We have to row, to let down the nets and to take in the many fish and nourish them with the life and truth of Christ. None of us can feel that we are exempt from this. On the contrary, the captain of this ship is Peter, the Holy Father, but the oars are moved by all the members of the Church.

To conclude I wish to share with you a passage of Scripture that I feel confirms our responsibility:

"This people says: 'Not now has the time come to rebuild the house of the LORD'...Is it time for you to dwell in your own paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins?...Consider your ways! You have sown much, but have brought in little...he who earned wages earned them for a bag with holes in it. Thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider your ways! Go up into the hill country; bring timber, and build the house That I may take pleasure in it and receive my glory, says the LORD." (Haggai 1: 2-8)

In the Love of the Pierced Hearts,

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