



The Holy See

MESSAGE OF JOHN PAUL II ON THE OCCASION OF THE 95th KATHOLIKENTAG IN GERMANY

To my Venerable Brother Bishop Gebhard Fürst of Rottenburg-Stuttgart

Venerable Brother in the Episcopate,

*Dear Brothers and Dear Sisters in Christ,*1. "*Living by the power of God*": with this maxim, many Christian Catholics and countless guests of other confessions and of the political and social world met in Ulm for the 95th German *Katholikentag*. From Rome I greet all those who took part in its opening celebration on the square in front of the Cathedral of Ulm. The cathedral's spire looks like a finger pointing to Heaven, towards God, the Creator of all life. He is the source of our hope and strength. The joy of the Lord is our strength (cf. Neh 8: 10). I greet all those who are following this event on radio and television. May the peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, crucified and risen and ever close to his Church, be with you! I address a special greeting to the Bishop of the Diocese of Rottenburg-Stuttgart and to the Central Committee of German Catholics who together organized this event. I also greet the Bishops of Germany, of all the other European countries and of the whole world; their presence highlights the communion of Catholics, manifest in the Dioceses of Germany, with their brothers and sisters of the same confession in the great universal Church.2. "*Living by the power of God*". The programme of the *Katholikentag* is guided by this maxim, taken from the Second Letter to the Corinthians [13: 4]. It is an incentive to make all liturgical celebrations, conversations and prayers come alive through the power of God. I urge you to spend these days with open eyes and hearts so that you may once again be aware that the power of God is dynamically at work within you and, through your witness to faith, can also be lived in society. During the events of this great Catholic meeting in which many other Christians are also taking part, may you feel the urge to raise your voices bravely as believing Christians whenever the foundations of the Christian faith and human coexistence are disputed, the lofty values of Christian marriage and of the family are overlooked and the uniqueness of life as a gift of God is at stake! Spur one another to be committed anew to the poor and the marginalized for peace and justice throughout the world! Bear witness to everyone to the hope that is in you (cf. I Pt 3: 15).3. The venue of your meeting, the city of Ulm, stands on the banks of the Danube, the great river that connects the East and West of Europe. In recent decades, the consciousness of a European identity and of a sense of belonging to the European peoples have grown stronger and stronger. Just a few weeks ago, another 10 States joined the European Union, including eight countries from Central and Eastern Europe. This expansion can become a great advantage for the community. Europe is not a mere or casual union of States geographically linked to one another. Europe, despite its cultural multiplicity, must increasingly become, on the basis of human and Christian values, a spiritual unit that inspires men and women in their actions. Let us therefore make the most of the possibility that united Europe offers us to spread Christ's Gospel better, so that no one is left without God's exceptional saving gift! Christians have toiled for European unity and continue to work for this end. Europe today

needs the contribution of Christians and Christianity if its peoples are to develop and flourish. As I said in my Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa*, the Continent needs "to make a qualitative leap in becoming conscious of its spiritual heritage. The impetus for this can only come from hearing anew the Gospel of Jesus Christ" (n. 120). Those who live by the power of God and intend to build up society by the power of God must face this task in every place and in every time.⁴ Dear Brothers and Sisters, in these days let the dynamism of God, who enlightens and liberates, move you! Entrust all human suffering, your shortcomings and your limitations to the greatness of God, whose love exceeds our own hearts. He wants to make us share in his divine life and give us the love and strength we need to serve our neighbour and to bear witness to our common faith in time and in society. *So that you may live by the power of God*, I commend all of you who have gathered in Ulm on the occasion of the *Katholikentag* to the intercession of Mary, the Most Holy Virgin and Mother of God, and to St Boniface, whose martyrdom 1,250 years ago the Church is commemorating in these days; and I wholeheartedly impart my Apostolic Blessing to you all. *From the Vatican, Solemnity of Corpus Christi 2004***JOHN PAUL II**
