

A Glimpse into the Analysis of Religious Discourse
- On the Basis of a Speech Addressed to Young People
by Pope John Paul II

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Abstract: Discourse can be understood in many different, very often contradictory ways. Regardless of the definition chosen, contemporary discourse analysis is connected with the investigation of text and context. This article constitutes an attempt to analyse religious discourse on the basis of a homily by John Paul II, presented in Toronto, 2002, during the celebration of World Youth Days. Due to the application of ten markers (i.e. situationality, emotions, recent history, remote history, general knowledge, juxtapositions, direct intertextuality, guidelines, dangers and teaching) we can describe the structure of the text.

Keywords: religious discourse, text, context, discourse analysis, John Paul II.

The origins of discourse analysis can be traced back to structural linguistics. It was Zellig Harris ([1952] 1970) who first tried to present a set of morphemes differentiating a text from a random collection of sentences (Chruszczewski 2002: 6). His followers, like John Austin (1962), Paul Grice (1975), Teun van Dijk ([1977] 1980) or Anna Wierzbicka (1985) changed the perspective of research and introduced a more functional view to this discipline (*ibid.*). Today, discourse studies focus basically on investigating texts in their context and the search for interrelationships between these two concepts.

In this paper I examine the phenomenon of religious discourse and base it on a speech of John Paul II which was delivered in Toronto during the 17th gathering for World Youth Days in 2002. I aim of to provide a brief insight into understanding discourse and present a suitable tool for its investigation. Therefore, I shall start by defining the notion of discourse and continue with the two inseparably connected concepts of text and context.

There are many definitions of discourse which are often contradictory. Out of the whole range of those available I have chosen three examples that supplement each other and are the most useful for our analysis. The first one is associated with Deborah Schiffrin and her *Approaches to Discourse*. She defines discourse as utterances, which she further understands as “units of language production (whether spoken or written) that are inherently contextualized” (Schiffrin [1994] 1997: 41). She indicates that “defining discourse as utterances forces us to attend to the contextualization of language structure (...)” (Schiffrin [1994] 1997: 40). Furthermore, her “definition demands attention to more than one utterance” and requires the examination of “extended patterns and sequential arrangements” (*ibid.*). Schiffrin concludes that this explanation of discourse permits a connection between the functional and formal aspects of language (*ibid.*). Thus, it constitutes a link between the formal approach, treating discourse structurally, in terms of some larger linguistic patterns, and the functional approach, focusing on language use and its contextual embedding.

The second definition which I have selected is provided by Janina Labocha (1996: 51) who understands “(...) discourse as a norm and a strategy applied during the process of creating a text and an utterance. Social and cultural patterns, making up the norm, are the basis of this strategy; and a text or utterance, with certain genre features, is its effect” (Trans. M.S.). Labocha counts these norms as an intermediate level between a system of linguistic rules and a particular text or an utterance (*ibid.*). She presents discourse from the perspective of either the text or utterance producer. The norms and strategies that a producer applies result from his/her own beliefs, intentions and goals, but at the same time are controlled by the social and cultural values respected by a certain community.

The third definition is postulated by Piotr Chruszczewski (2002: 5), who considers discourse as “(...) a dynamic phenomenon, with its core being individual textual realizations, which is of three-fold nature: situational, social and cultural.” Apart from indicating the relationship between discourse and text, the researcher determines three kinds of surrounding context. Additionally, he suggests the dynamic character of discourse, which results from its nature, namely, from the changing situational, social and cultural embeddings.

Since text is situated in the centre of discourse, it is worth recalling Janina Labocha’s statement (1996: 49) that it “(...) is not only a sequence of sentences occurring in a definite order and according to particular rules, but, above all, it is a unique unit of linguistic communication” (Trans. M.S.). If text is treated as a unit of

communication, it means that people communicate through texts, or in other words, through elements that constitute an inherent part of discourse.

However, what are the qualities of “being a text” (see Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk (1993:150)? In their *Introduction to Text Linguistics*, Robert-Alain de Beaugrande and Wolfgang Ulrich Dressler ([1981] 1986) describe standards of textuality. They define a text as “a communicative occurrence which meets seven standards of textuality” and continue that all standards have to be satisfied in order to consider a text communicative (3). For them a non-communicative text cannot be treated as a text (*ibid.*). Therefore, they treat cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situationality and intertextuality as the set of necessary conditions to create a text. Nevertheless, very often, despite violation of the above mentioned standards, a text can still remain communicative. If we take into account a structure like: *She don't live in London*, we will not consider it cohesive. It could be uttered, for instance, by a non-native learner of English and functions as an overgeneralization of a grammatical rule. Instead of *does* - a typical auxiliary for the third person singular, we have *do*. Interestingly, the sentence, although ungrammatical and consequently non-cohesive, is still communicative. In fact, each native speaker or other non-native speaker is able to obtain its intended meaning and this is the reason why we treat it as a text.

In trying to grasp the idea of context, I shall start by quoting Teun van Dijk (2005)¹ as saying that “*there is not a single monograph that provides an explicit theory of context.*” The field is highly interdisciplinary and as such requires knowledge from various areas. In this paper I adhere to the definition provided by Piotr Chruszczewski (2002: 35) for whom “(...) context is (...) a compound and dynamic entity (...) composed of cultural embedding, being the largest one and encompassing the others, *i.e.* social embedding as well as situational embedding.” This is necessary for texts to be properly understood. To exemplify this, the noun phrase *a sheep* may refer either to an animal (in a book concerning biology) or to a member of a Christian community (see Lk 15,6). Depending on situational, social and cultural embeddings, we classify the former text as an example of educational discourse and the latter, as an instance of religious discourse.

In our case, the text analysed is a homily by Pope John Paul II presented during his last celebration of World Youth Days. Therefore the situational embedding is directly bound to the meeting of the Pope with young people. The homily was

¹ <http://discourses.org/UnpublishedArticles.html>, (*Macro Contexts*), 2012

delivered in Toronto, during a Sunday Mass, 28th July, 2002. Due to the huge number of participants, the meeting was organised in Downsview Park.

The social embedding includes over one million attendees coming mainly from Canada as well as other listeners who for various reasons could not be personally present and participated indirectly via the media. The young people gathered in Toronto reacted spontaneously to the words of John Paul II. Most of them were Catholics, treated the Pope as an authority and wanted to listen to him.

Bearing in mind that the homily was delivered by a Pole and that the receivers were of multinational background, the cultural embedding seems to be a very complex one. Because of the two official languages spoken in Canada, the speech was delivered partly in French and partly in English. Although the speaker and his receivers were not related by national bonds, they were connected by a particular feeling of respect and a sense of belonging to the same religious community.

The text is analysed on the basis of a method constructed by Piotr Chruszczewski. In his *American Presidential Discourse Analysis* the author describes it as an “efficient and relatively simple one” (Chruszczewski 2003: 15). Although the method was primarily used for the investigation of political discourse, it can also be applied to the analysis of religious discourse. Generally, it involves a division of texts into arguments and establishing a set of markers that characterise them.

All the arguments are numbered and comprise a development of a single thought. While shorter arguments require the application of a single marker, longer ones need a combination of elements for their proper description. The following markers are taken into consideration (see Chruszczewski 2003: 17-19):

- (A) – a marker of **situationality**; refers to the context of situation, *i.e.* to the World Youth Day, the place of its celebration or its participants.
- (B) – a marker of **emotions**; a marker which reveals the emotional aspects of a text (*i.e.* not only expressions of the speaker’s emotions, but also elements that are to evoke the receivers’ emotions).
- (C₁) – a marker of **recent history**; a type of element by which the speaker refers to relatively recent events.
- (C₂) – a marker of **remote history**; a reference to historical events that occurred in the distant past.

- (C₃) – a marker of **general knowledge**; a set of facts and assumptions that are commonly shared by the receivers.
- (D) – a marker of **juxtapositions**; a marker which focuses on juxtaposed, usually contrasting elements that construct a certain argument.
- (E) – a marker of **direct intertextuality**; quotations from other sources (like the Bible or documents issued by the Church).
- (F₁) – a marker of **guidelines**; pieces of advice, instructions of the speaker that concern the future of the receivers.
- (F₂) – a marker of **dangers**; an element by which the speaker presents and condemns evil (*i.e.* negative patterns of behavior, their consequences and dangers).
- (F₃) – a marker of **teaching**; explanations of the nature of God and humans, interpretations of the Bible, definitions of certain concepts.

The first seven markers (*i.e.* situationality, emotions, recent history, remote history, general knowledge, juxtapositions and direct intertextuality) have been defined and applied by Piotr Chruszczewski (2003). The use of remaining three markers (*i.e.* guidelines, dangers and teaching) results from the specific character of the religious discourse analysed.

In the course of analysis, the text (see the Appendix to this paper) has been divided into numbered arguments and to each of them the aforementioned markers have been adjusted. As a result, the following model of argument development emerges:

1. E (intertextuality), 2. A (situationality), 3. C₃/D/F₃ (general knowledge/ juxtapositions/ teaching), 4. A/B (situationality/ emotions), 5. F₁/B (guidelines/ emotions), 6. F₃ (teaching), 7. D/C₃ (juxtapositions/ general knowledge), 8. A/C₃/D/F₃/C₃ (situationality/ general knowledge/ juxtapositions/ teaching/ general knowledge), 9. D/B/E (juxtapositions/ emotions/ intertextuality), 10. C₃/F₂ (general knowledge/ dangers), 11. F₂/D (dangers/ juxtapositions), 12. F₂/D (dangers/ juxtapositions), 13. D/B/A (juxtapositions/ emotions/ situationality), 14. A/E/C₃/E/F₃ (situationality/ intertextuality/ general knowledge/ intertextuality/ teaching), 15. B/C₃ (emotions/ general knowledge), 16. C₃/D/F₁/C₃/D (general knowledge/ juxtapositions/ guidelines/ general knowledge/ juxtapositions), 17. F₁/E (guidelines/ intertextuality), 18. C₃/F₁/A/E (general knowledge/ guidelines/ situationality/ intertextuality), 19. C₃/B/F₁ (general knowledge/ emotions/ guidelines), 20.

F₁/C₁/B/D/F₁ (guidelines/ recent history/ emotions/ juxtapositions/ guidelines), 21. A/F₁ (situationality/ guidelines), 22. F₃/C₂/C₃ (teaching/ remote history/ general knowledge), 23. D/C₃ (juxtapositions/ general knowledge), 24. C₁/D (recent history/ juxtapositions), 25. B/F₁ (emotions/ guidelines), 26. F₃/D (teaching/ juxtapositions), 27. B/C₃/B/C₃ (emotions/ general knowledge/ emotions/ general knowledge), 28. B/A/B (emotions/ situationality/ emotions).

Having presented the structure of the text, we should take into consideration the construction of single arguments. In order to do this, I shall list all the types of arguments applied and supply them with proper examples:

Single-element arguments:

1. A (situationality); 2¹.

Dear Young People of the Seventeenth World Youth Day,

2. E (intertextuality); 1.

“You are the salt of the earth! You are the light of the world!” (Mt 5:13-14)

3. F₃ (teaching); 6.

His words tell you who you are as Christians. They tell you what you must do to remain in his love.

Two-element arguments:

1. A/B (situationality/ emotions); 4.

Today he is speaking the same words to you, the young people of Toronto and Ontario, of the whole of Canada, of the United States, of the Caribbean, of Spanish-speaking America and Portuguese-speaking America, of Europe, Africa, Asia and Oceania.

2. A/F₁ (situationality/ guidelines); 21.

There are many priests, seminarians and consecrated persons here today; be close to them and support them! And if, in the depths of your hearts, you feel the same call to the priesthood or consecrated life, do not be afraid to follow Christ on the royal road of the Cross!

¹ The numbers refer to the numbers of arguments.

3. B/C₃ (emotions/ general knowledge); 15.

The world you are inheriting is a world which desperately needs a new sense of brotherhood and human solidarity. It is a world which needs to be touched and healed by the beauty and richness of God's love. *It needs witnesses to that love. The world needs salt. It needs you* - to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

4.B/F₁ (emotions/ guidelines); 25.

You are our hope, the young are our hope. Do not let that hope die! Stake your lives on it!

5. C₁/D (recent history/ juxtapositions); 24.

Although I have lived through much darkness, under harsh totalitarian regimes, I have seen enough evidence to be unshakably convinced that no difficulty, no fear is so great that it can completely suffocate *the hope that springs eternal in the hearts of the young.*

6. C₃/F₂ (general knowledge/ dangers); 10.

The "spirit of the world" *offers many false illusions and parodies of happiness.*

7. D/C₃ (juxtapositions/ general knowledge); 7.

But Jesus offers one thing, and the "spirit of the world" offers another.

8. D/C₃ (juxtapositions/ general knowledge); 23.

You are young, and the Pope is old, 82 or 83 years of life is not the same as 22 or 23. But the Pope still fully identifies with your hopes and aspirations.

9. F₁/B (guidelines/ emotions); 5.

Listen to the voice of Jesus in the depths of your hearts!

10. F₁/E (guidelines/ intertextuality); 17.

You must keep alive the memory of the *words of life* which he spoke, the marvellous works of mercy and goodness which he performed. You must constantly remind the world of the "power of the Gospel to save" (Rom 1, 16)!

11. F₂/D (dangers/ juxtapositions); 11.

There is perhaps no darkness deeper than the darkness that enters young people's souls when false prophets extinguish in them the light of faith and hope and love.

12. F₂/D (dangers/ juxtapositions); 12.

The greatest deception, and the deepest source of unhappiness, is *the illusion of finding life by excluding God*, of finding freedom by excluding moral truths and personal responsibility.

13. F₃/D (teaching/ juxtapositions); 26.

We are not the sum of our weaknesses and failures; we are the sum of the Father's love for us and our real capacity to become the image of his Son.

Three-element arguments:

1. B/A/B (emotions/ situationality/ emotions); 28.

Mary, Mother of the Church, protect and guide these young men and women of the Twenty-first Century. Keep us all close to your maternal heart. Amen.

2. C₃/B/F₁ (general knowledge/ emotions/ guidelines); 19.

Even a tiny flame lifts the heavy lid of night. How much more light will you make, all together, if you bond as one in the communion of the Church! *If you love Jesus, love the Church!*

3. C₃/D/F₃ (general knowledge/ juxtapositions/ teaching); 3.

On a hillside near the lake of Galilee, Jesus's disciples listened to his gentle and urgent voice; as *gentle* as the landscape of Galilee itself, as *urgent* as a call to choose between life and death, between truth and falsehood. The Lord spoke words of life that would echo for ever in the hearts of his followers.

4. D/B/A (juxtapositions/ emotions/ situationality); 13.

The Lord is calling you to choose between these two voices competing for your souls. *That decision is the substance and challenge of World Youth Day.*

5. D/B/E (juxtapositions/ emotions/ intertextuality); 9.

You too are called to be transformed. *"Awake, O sleeper, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light"* (Eph 5, 14), says Saint Paul.

6. F₃/C₂/C₃ (teaching/ remote history/ general knowledge); 22.

At difficult moments in the Church's life, the pursuit of holiness becomes even more urgent. And *holiness is not a question of age*; it is a matter of *living in the Holy Spirit*, just as Kateri Tekakwitha did here in America and so many other young people have done.

Four-element arguments:1. B/C₃/B/C₃ (emotions/ general knowledge/ emotions/ general knowledge); 27.

I finish with a prayer. O Lord Jesus Christ, keep these young people in your love. Let them hear your voice and believe what you say, for *you alone have the words of life*. Teach them how to *profess their faith, bestow their love, and impart their hope to others*. Make them convincing witnesses to your Gospel in a world so much in need of your saving grace. Make them the new people of the Beatitudes, that they may be the salt of the earth and the light of the world at the beginning of the Third Christian Millennium!

2. C₃/F₁/A/E (general knowledge/ guidelines/ situationality/ intertextuality); 18.

Salt seasons and improves the flavour of food. Following Jesus, you have to change and improve the "taste" of human history. With your faith, hope and love, with your intelligence, courage and perseverance, you have to humanize the world we live in, in the way that today's Reading from Isaiah indicates: "loose the bonds of injustice ... share your bread with the hungry ... remove the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil.... *Then your light shall rise in the darkness*"(Is58,6-10).

Five-element arguments:1. A/C₃/D/F₃/C₃ (situationality/ general knowledge/ juxtapositions/ teaching/ general knowledge); 8.

In today's Reading from the Letter to the Ephesians, Saint Paul tells us that Jesus leads us *from darkness into light* (cf. Eph 5,8). Perhaps the great Apostle is thinking of the light that blinded him, the persecutor of Christians, on the road to Damascus. When later he recovered his sight, *nothing was as before*. He had been born anew and nothing would ever take his new-found joy away from him.

2. A/E/C₃/E/F₃ (situationality/ intertextuality/ general knowledge/ intertextuality/ teaching); 14.

Why have you come together from all parts of the world? To say in your hearts: *"Lord, to whom shall we go?"* Who has the words of eternal life? *"You have the words of eternal life"* (Jn 6,68). Jesus - the intimate friend of every young person - has the words of life.

3. C₃/D/F₁/C₃/D (general knowledge/ juxtapositions/ guidelines/ general knowledge/ juxtapositions); 16.

Salt is used to preserve and keep. As apostles for the Third Millennium, your task is to preserve and keep alive *the awareness of the presence of our Savior Jesus Christ*, especially in the celebration of the Eucharist, the *memorial* of his saving death and glorious resurrection.

4. F₁/C₁/B/D/F₁ (guidelines/ recent history/ emotions/ juxtapositions/ guidelines); 20.

Do not be discouraged by the sins and failings of some of her members. The harm done by some priests and religious to the young and vulnerable *fills us all with a deep sense of sadness and shame*. But think of the vast majority of dedicated and generous priests and religious whose only wish is to serve and do good!

In order to work out a model of arguments' types, I shall present the exact numbers of one-, two-, three-, four-, and five-element structures. Figures included in Table 1 represent the quantities of various arguments.

	numbers of applied arguments
1-element arguments	3
2-element arguments	13
3-element arguments	6
4-element arguments	2
5-element arguments	4

Table 1. Types of arguments used in the homily

Having analysed these numbers, the following model can be developed: two-element arguments/ three-element arguments/ five-element arguments/ one-element arguments/ four-element arguments. As we can see from this, two-element

arguments prevail. The number of two-element arguments exceeds the quantity of three-element structures. Five-element arguments occupy the third position in the model and one-element arguments are in fourth place. Arguments built from four elements are used the least frequently. Looking at the representation of the model, we can infer that the speaker does not intend to deliver a speech that is either too overloaded with information or too simple. Instead, he chooses a middle variant of difficulty and applies mainly two- and three-element arguments.

Since I also aim at providing a general model of argument development, first I calculate the numbers of particular markers applied and present them in the figure below:

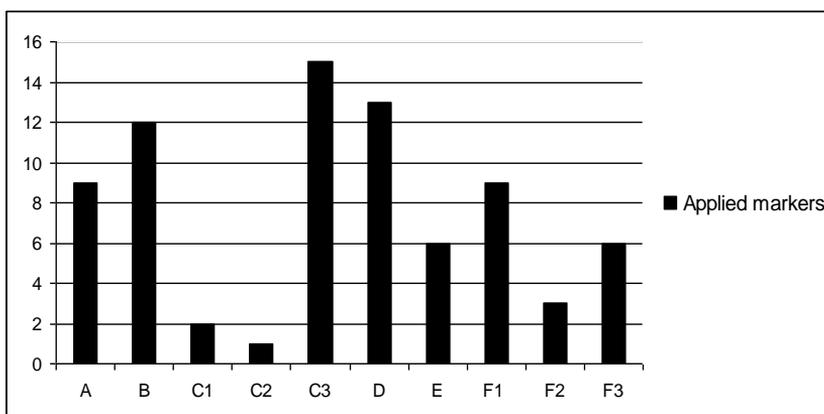


Figure 1. The numbers of applied markers

Based on the data from Figure 1, we transform them into a table which constitutes a direct representation of the model being discussed:

(C₃) general knowledge	15
(D) juxtapositions	13
(B) emotions	12
(A) situationality	9
(F₁) guidelines	9

(E) intertextuality	6
(F₃) teaching	6
(F₂) dangers	3
(C₁) recent history	2
(C₂) remote history	1

Table 2. The model of argument development

Finally we receive the following model of argument development: C₃/D/B/A/F₁/E/F₃/F₂/C₁/C₂ (general knowledge/ juxtapositions/ emotions/ situationality/ guidelines/ intertextuality/ teaching/ dangers/ recent history/ remote history). As can be noticed, the first three markers are almost evenly distributed, *i.e.* general knowledge (C₃) occurs fifteen times, juxtapositions (D) – thirteen and emotions (B) twelve times. Out of these, reference to the presumed knowledge of the receivers constitutes the most frequently used element. Furthermore, it is possible to distinguish various areas to which the speaker refers, *e.g.*

- (a) knowledge of the Bible, its protagonists and events , *e.g.* “On a hillside near the lake of Galilee, Jesus’s disciples listened to his gentle and urgent voice (...)” (3).
- (b) universal knowledge, *e.g.* “Salt is used to preserve and keep” (16).
- (c) personal experience, *e.g.* “You are young and the Pope is old, 82 or 83 years of life is not the same as 22 or 23” (23).
- (d) theme of World Youth Day, *e.g.* “Make them the new people of the Beatitude, that they may be the salt of the earth and the light of the world at the beginning of the Third Christian Millennium!” (27) as a paraphrase of a Biblical quotation: “You are the salt of Earth (...) You are the light of the world” (Mt 5,13-14).

The speech is built upon juxtaposed elements. They include either one-word concepts (*e.g.* “death” vs. “life,” “truth” vs. “falsehood” 3) or more developed, contrasting ideas (*e.g.* “(...) *the illusion of finding life by excluding God*, of finding freedom by excluding moral truths and personal responsibility” 12). Furthermore, the homily is highly emotional. The speaker either reveals his emotions, *e.g.* “The harm done by some priests and religious to the young and vulnerable fills us all with

a deep sense of sadness and shame” (20) or uses phrases that are to stir emotions in the receivers, *e.g.* “Listen to the voice of Jesus in the depths of your hearts!” (5). The text ends with a direct request to Christ and St. Mary which further confirms its emotional content.

Both situationality (A) and guidelines (F₁) appear nine times within the text. The first one occurs when the speaker underlines the occasion on which his speech is delivered (*e.g.* “Dear Young People of the Seventeenth World Youth Day” 2), refers to its place (*e.g.* “Today he is speaking the same words to you, the young people of Toronto and Ontario, of the whole Canada (...)” 4) or time (*e.g.*, “In today’s Reading (...)” 8). Due to this, he can present all his references to the situational context. On the contrary, the second marker represents pieces of advice which can be further divided into more general (*e.g.* “You must keep alive the memory of the words of life which he spoke (...)” 17) or very specific ones (*e.g.* “With your faith, hope and love, with your intelligence, courage and perseverance, you have to humanize the world we live in (...)” 18). Intertextuality (E) and teaching (F₃) are distributed in a similar way and as a result can be found six times in the text. The sources of quotations can be separated into New and Old Testament quotes, out of which the former prevails. Teaching involves a kind of explanation and refers to the Bible (*e.g.* “Perhaps the great Apostle is thinking of the light that blinded him, the persecutor of Christians, on the road to Damascus” 8), the person of God (*e.g.* “His words tell you *who you are as Christians*” 6), human nature (*e.g.* “We are not the sum of our weaknesses and failures” 26) or Church doctrine (*e.g.* “holiness is not a question of age, it is a matter of living in the Holy Spirit” 22).

The remaining three markers (*i.e.* dangers, recent history and remote history) occur very rarely. Dangers (F₂) has been applied three times, which in comparison with the usages of teaching and guidelines indicates that the speaker avoids focusing on evil, and instead of threatening, he suggests the hearers a positive perspective to the listeners. Two references to recent historical events (C₁) and only one to remote history (C₂) confirm the basic speaker’s intention of being understood. The author wants to communicate certain ideas and, in order to ease the processing of receivers, he refers more frequently to their general knowledge. Bearing in mind the crowds of young people gathered in order to listen to him, such a strategy seems perfectly justifiable.

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Appendix¹

JOHN PAUL II

HOMILY FOR THE 17th WORLD YOUTH DAY ²

Toronto, Downsview Park, Sunday, July 28, 2002

- [*"You are the salt of the earth!
You are the light of the world!"* (Mt 5:13-14)] 1
- Dear Young People of the Seventeenth World Youth Day, 2
- On a hillside near the lake of Galilee, Jesus's disciples listened to his gentle and urgent voice; as *gentle* as the landscape of Galilee itself, as *urgent* as a call to choose between life and death, between truth and falsehood. The Lord spoke words of life that would echo forever in the hearts of his followers. 3
- Today he is speaking the same words to you, the young people of Toronto and Ontario, of the whole of Canada, of the United States, of the Caribbean, of Spanish-speaking America and Portuguese-speaking America, of Europe, Africa, Asia and Oceania. 4
- Listen to the voice of Jesus in the depths of your hearts! 5
- His words tell you *who you are as Christians*. They tell you *what you must do to remain in his love*. 6
- But Jesus offers one thing, and the "spirit of the world" offers another. 7

¹ The text of the homily has been used with the permission of Polish Episcopal Conference

² http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/homilies/2002/documents/hf_jpii_hom_20020728_xvii-wyd_en.html, 2012

In today's Reading from the Letter to the Ephesians, Saint Paul tells us that Jesus leads us *from darkness into light* (cf. Eph 5,8). Perhaps the great Apostle is thinking of the light that blinded him, the persecutor of Christians, on the road to Damascus. When later he recovered his sight, *nothing was as before*. He had been born anew and nothing would ever take his new-found joy away from him. 8

You too are called to be transformed. "*Awake, O sleeper, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light*" (Eph 5, 14), says Saint Paul. 9

The "spirit of the world" *offers many false illusions and parodies of happiness*. 10

There is perhaps no darkness deeper than the darkness that enters young people's souls when false prophets extinguish in them the light of faith and hope and love. 11

The greatest deception, and the deepest source of unhappiness, is *the illusion of finding life by excluding God*, of finding freedom by excluding moral truths and personal responsibility. 12

The Lord is calling you to choose between these two voices competing for your souls. *That decision is the substance and challenge of World Youth Day*. 13

Why have you come together from all parts of the world? To say in your hearts: "*Lord, to whom shall we go?*" Who has the words of eternal life? "*You have the words of eternal life*" (Jn 6,68). Jesus - the intimate friend of every young person - has the words of life. 14

The world you are inheriting is a world which desperately needs a new sense of brotherhood and human solidarity. It is a world which needs to be touched and healed by the beauty and richness of God's love. *It needs witnesses to that love. The world needs salt. It needs you* - to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. 15

Salt is used to preserve and keep. As apostles for the Third Millennium, your task is to preserve and keep alive *the awareness of the presence of our Savior Jesus Christ*, especially in the celebration of the Eucharist, the *memorial* of his saving death and 16

glorious resurrection.

You must keep alive the memory of the *words of life* which he spoke, the marvellous works of mercy and goodness which he performed. You must constantly remind the world of the "power of the Gospel to save" (Rom 1, 16)! 17

Salt seasons and improves the flavour of food. Following Jesus, you have to change and improve the "taste" of human history. With your faith, hope and love, with your intelligence, courage and perseverance, you have to humanize the world we live in, in the way that today's Reading from Isaiah indicates: "loose the bonds of injustice ... share your bread with the hungry ... remove the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil... *Then your light shall rise in the darkness*" (Is 58,6-10).] 18

Even a tiny flame lifts the heavy lid of night. How much more light will you make, all together, if you bond as one in the communion of the Church! If you love Jesus, love the Church! 19

Do not be discouraged by the sins and failings of some of her members. The harm done by some priests and religious to the young and vulnerable fills us all with a deep sense of sadness and shame. But think of the vast majority of dedicated and generous priests and religious whose only wish is to serve and do good! 20

There are many priests, seminarians and consecrated persons here today; be close to them and support them! And if, in the depths of your hearts, you feel the same call to the priesthood or consecrated life, do not be afraid to follow Christ on the royal road of the Cross! 21

At difficult moments in the Church's life, the pursuit of holiness becomes even more urgent. And holiness is not a question of age; it is a matter of living in the Holy Spirit, just as Kateri Tekakwitha did here in America and so many other young people have done. 22

You are young, and the Pope is old, 82 or 83 years of life is not the same as 22 or 23. But the Pope still fully identifies with your hopes and aspirations. 23

Although I have lived through much darkness, under harsh totalitarian regimes, I have seen enough evidence to be unshakably convinced that no difficulty, no fear is so great that it can completely suffocate the hope that springs eternal in the hearts of the young. 24

You are our hope, the young are our hope. Do not let that hope die! Stake your lives on it! 25

We are not the sum of our weaknesses and failures; we are the sum of the Father's love for us and our real capacity to become the image of his Son. 26

I finish with a prayer. O Lord Jesus Christ, keep these young people in your love. Let them hear your voice and believe what you say, for you alone have the words of life. Teach them how to profess their faith, bestow their love, and impart their hope to others. Make them convincing witnesses to your Gospel in a world so much in need of your saving grace. Make them the new people of the Beatitudes, that they may be the salt of the earth and the light of the world at the beginning of the Third Christian Millennium! 27

Mary, Mother of the Church, protect and guide these young men and women of the Twenty-first Century. Keep us all close to your maternal heart. Amen. 28