

**"DUC IN ALTUM"**  
**COMMENTS TO THE POPE'S MESSAGE**  
**TO THE GUIDES AND SCOUTS OF EUROPE**  
**GATHERED AT THE "EUROJAM"**

From August 3<sup>rd</sup> to 10th 2003

Index

Title .....	4
Gratitude .....	4
The theme : "Duc in altum".....	5
Generous answer to Christ's call to become his witnesses.....	6
The Church entrusts us with the mission of testifying of Christ and inventing a future with Him .....	7
Basic means to fulfill the mission entrusted to us by the Church.....	7
The experience of scouting, a privileged itinerary of spiritual growth, for the integral education of the person .	13
Scouting as a « high standard » of ordinary Christian living.....	14
The call to take part in the construction of the new Europe.....	15
The Marian dimension of our specific pedagogy .....	19
Jesus' support to live scouting in a coherent way, as a means of sanctification .....	22

MESSAGE OF JOHN PAUL II  
TO THE GUIDES AND SCOUTS OF EUROPE

Gathered at the *Eurojam* in Poland,

August 3-10 2003

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**TO THE GUIDES AND SCOUTS OF EUROPE  
GATHERED FOR THE SIXTH EUROPEAN JAMBOREE  
ON JULY 30<sup>th</sup> 2003**

1. On the occasion of the European jamboree of the International Union of Guides and Scouts of Europe, taking place in Poland, I am glad to send you, dear Guides and Scouts of Europe, a warm greeting and to assure you of my deep union in prayer. The theme of this "Eurojam", "Duc in altum!", comes from the words of Jesus to Peter: "Put out into deep water » (Lk 5, 4). It invites you to deepen the spiritual itinerary which was offered to all Christians in the world at the end of the great jubilee of 2000 and to young people, in Toronto, last year.
2. Dear young people, answer generously to Jesus Christ's call who invites you to « put out into deep water » and to become his witnesses. You will discover the trust that Christ puts in you to invent a future with him. In order to be accomplished, this mission entrusted to you by the Church first requires cultivating an authentic life of prayer, nourished by the sacraments, especially by Eucharist and Reconciliation. As I have underlined it in the recent Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, "every commitment to holiness [...] must draw the strength it needs from the Eucharistic mystery and in turn be directed to that mystery as its culmination" (nr. 60). So it is important that the Holy Mass should constitute the centre and the culmination of this meeting, as well as of all your meetings, and most particularly of your weeks in the celebration of the Lord's Day.

The scout experience is a privileged itinerary of spiritual growth, a way of great value to facilitate the integral education of the person. It helps to overcome the temptation of indifference and selfishness in order to open oneself to one's neighbour and to society. It may favour efficiently the welcome of requirements of the Christian vocation: to be "salt of the earth and light of the world" (see Mt 5, 13-16). I invite you to be faithful to the rich tradition of the scout movement, committed into the formation to dialogue, the sense of justice, loyalty, brotherhood in social relationships. Such a style of life may be your original contribution to the realisation of a greater and more authentic fraternity between the European peoples, a precious contribution to the life of the societies in which you live

3. Dear Guides and Scouts of Europe, you are a precious gift not only for the Church but also for the new Europe that is being built under your eyes. You are called « to take part, with all the ardour of your youth, to the construction of the Europe of peoples, so that every person may be recognised in his dignity of beloved son of God and so that a society founded on solidarity and fraternal charity may occur » (Audience with the Guides and Scouts of Europe, August 3<sup>rd</sup> 1994).
4. At the Marian sanctuary of Jasna Góra, which is so dear to me, you are going to renew in front of the Virgin of Częstochowa the commitments of your Baptism, your scout promise and your will to be real apostles of the Lord's love. You are going to repeat the act of consecration to Our Lady of the Annunciation, already pronounced almost twenty years ago in Notre-Dame de Paris cathedral, on the occasion of your first European meeting. Since then, the fiat by which Mary has answered to God's will

has become a central element of the spirituality of the Guides and Scouts of Europe, especially in the prayer of the Angelus and the Rosary. May these moments of Marian prayer, in this year consecrated to Our Lady of the Rosary, go on impregnating your days, reviving in your hearts the memory of the marvel of the work of Redemption accomplished for us by Christ!

When you go back home, in your families, in your communities, enriched by the experience of these days, let Jesus' words re-echo in you: « I am with you always, to the end of the age » (Mt, 28, 20). Supported by his grace, try to fulfil your commitment with a renewed enthusiasm; thus scouting will be for you « a means of sanctification within the Church » that will favour and encourage « a more intimate union between concrete life and your faith » (Statutes, art. 1.2.7.).

Such is the wish that I formulate for you in prayer. Invoking upon your European meeting, upon the responsible leaders of the International Union of Guides and Scouts of Europe and upon each one of you the intercession of the Blessed Virgin of Czestochowa, with all my heart, I give you all an affectionate apostolic Blessing.

From Castel Gandolfo, July 30<sup>th</sup> 2003.

IOANNES PAULUS II

## COMMENTS TO THE MESSAGE

### Title

As regards the title of the Message "To the Guides and Scouts of Europe gathered for the 6<sup>th</sup> European jamboree", which does not seem to correspond to what is written at nr 4 (the *Act of Consecration to Our Lady of the Annunciation* took place « almost 20 years ago... on the occasion of your first European meeting »), we must precise what follows:

The Federation of European Scouting (FSE) has had six international meetings, the first three being called « federal camps » and the last three « Eurojams ».

"Federal camps" :

1. in St. Loup de Naud in France in 1960
2. in Marbourg in Germany in 1964
3. in Kergonan in France in 1968

After that, no meeting of that type happened for sixteen years.

"Eurojam" :

1. in Châteauroux in France in 1984
2. in Viterbo in Italy in 1994
3. in Żelazko in Poland in 2003

The *Act of consecration to Our Lady of the Annunciation* took place in 1984, on the occasion of the « first Eurojam », followed by the meeting of Viterbo in 1994, officially called the « second Eurojam » ; whereas the international meeting organized this year in Poland was at the same time the « third Eurojam » and the « sixth European meeting ».

### Gratitude

Before any attempt of commenting the words that the Pope sent us in Poland, we must express once again, in this place, our deepest gratitude towards His Holiness John Paul II for welcoming the « great hope » nourished by the *International Union of Guides and Scouts of Europe –Federation of European Scouting* (UIGSE-FSE) to have Him "among us" at the *Eurojam* "thanks to a brief specific message"<sup>1</sup>, and for the inexpressible joy that seized all participants to the Holy Mass, celebrated on August 7<sup>th</sup> at the shrine of the Virgin of Czestochowa, when his Message was read – like a homily – in Polish, French and Italian : a joy that invaded the heart of all people there. It reached every part of the Union in Europe immediately, thanks to the Medias.

The Pope was with us, even before sending our greeting telegram<sup>2</sup> on August 3rd 2003, at the official opening ceremony of the *Eurojam* in Żelazko, a splendid little village located in smiling hills with green fields and fir tree forests, in the South of Poland, some hundreds kilometers from his native village and from Krakow, the archbishop see when he served before becoming Pope in Rome. His Message to us was signed in Castelgandolfo on July 30th 2003 and personally given to the chiefs of the Union by His Eminence Reverend

<sup>1</sup> This wish was filially expressed to him in a letter on May 29th 2003 to S.E.R. Mons. Leonardo Sandri, Substitute of the State Secretary of His Holiness.

<sup>2</sup> The greeting telegram was the following one: « Holiness, the Guides and Scouts of Europe of the UIGSE-FSE, gathered for the 6th Eurojam, in this marvelous place of Poland, Diocese of Sosnowiec, send you in filial devotedness our warmest greetings and our fervent prayers so that the whole world may listen to the voice of the supreme Pastor and obey him in all its actions. In a few days, we shall make a pious pilgrimage to the Virgin of Czestochowa, in order to renew our Act of trust to Our Lady of the Annunciation and to implore her celestial graces, so that she may guide us according to the motto of the Eurojam "Duc in Altum" on all seas of life, and so that all the girls and boys who are entrusted to us may accomplish their own fundamental vocation to holiness. With these feelings, we implore your apostolic Blessing. Grieco Attilio, Federal Chairman ».

Cardinal Jozef Glemp, Primate of Poland, during his visit, most appreciated, to the camp itself, on August 6th, just the day before the pilgrimage of the whole *Eurojam* to the shrine of the Virgin of Jasna Góra in Częstochowa.

The Pope begins his Message by declaring that he is « glad to send » to « the dear Guides and Scouts of Europe », gathered in this *Eurojam* “a warm greeting” and to assure them of his “deep union in prayer”. Through the reading of his Message on August 7<sup>th</sup>, his presence was fascinating; it impregnated with great joy all the “activities” and all the prayers of the *Eurojam*.

Logically, the first thought was to see how to thank the Pope for so much esteem and for his so encouraging words. As a modest “thank you”, the Chairman of the Federation sent to the Pope, on August 9<sup>th</sup>, the following telegram, which seems useful to quote completely, especially because it expresses in the second paragraph a commitment implying the whole future of the Union.

Here is the text of the telegram:

« Holiness,

All Guides and Scouts of Europe, gathered in Poland, have welcomed with great enthusiasm the mostly appreciated message that Your Holiness kindly sent us and that His Eminence, Cardinal Glemp, Primate of Poland, delivered us on the occasion of the solemn Mass crowning the pilgrimage of the 9.000 participants of the *Eurojam* to the shrine of Jasna Góra in order to honor Mary, Queen of Poland, and to renew our Act of trust to Our Lady of the Annunciation.

All leaders of the *International Union of Guides and Scouts – Federation of European Scouting* will have the task to dispatch the message of Your Holiness into the heart of all the boys and all the girls who are entrusted to us, so that they may apply it in their daily life, convinced that Our Lord Jesus Christ is always with them.

I thank you most particularly for the Apostolic Blessing that Your Holiness gave us and I express the filial devotedness of the whole *International Union of Guides and Scouts of Europe – Federation of European Scouting*, as well as my own to Your Holiness.

Attilio Grieco – Federal Chairman

Żelazko, August 9th 2003 ».

The theme : "Duc in altum"

Just after assuring us of his « deep union in prayer », the Pope considers the theme of the *Eurojam*, “Duc in altum” (“Put out into the deep” Lk 5,4), reminding us that this theme shows “the spiritual way offered to all Christians of the world at the end of the Great Jubilee of the year 2000 and to the youth in Toronto” during the XVIIth World Youth Day, at the end of July 2002.

The UIGSE-FSE has chosen the motto “Duc in Altum” for the *Eurojam* in Poland precisely to follow strictly and willingly this way; it has put it in the suggestive *Logo of the Eurojam*, specifying that it means “the Pope’s missionary invitation sent to each one of us” (see the booklet given to all guides and scouts for the camp, *Eurojam 2003*, p. 5).

At the end of the Great Jubilee (January 6th 2001), the Pope presented to the world his Apostolic Letter *Novo millennio ineunte*, based on the words of Jesus "Duc in altum", from the first paragraphs to the conclusion. « Duc in altum ! – the Pope says (nr. 1) – This word

echoes for us today and invites us to remember the past with pleasure, to live the present with passion and to turn ourselves towards the future with confidence: "Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today and forever!" (Hb 13,8) ».

These words follow a fascinating Jubilee – in which we were numerous to take part, especially in the very committing and joyful activities of our Rovers and Rangers during the WYD of August 2000. However, this "cannot justify a feeling of satisfaction or lead us to an attitude of disengagement". On the reverse, it should "*arise in us a new dynamism*, urge us to invest the enthusiasm that we have felt into concrete initiatives". We are conscious that "for the cause of the Kingdom there is no time to look backwards, even less to abandon ourselves to idleness". Consequently, "now we have to look forward, we must 'put out into the deep', confident in Christ's word : *Duc in altum!*" (nr 15).

Even if « concrete initiatives » may be frustrating, even if we say, as in the episode of the miraculous fishing "we worked all night and took nothing" (Lk 5, 5), these words should give us indestructible enthusiasm. As the Pope tells us, it will be "the moment of faith, of prayer, of dialogue with God, to open our heart to the flood of grace and to consent to Christ's word to pierce us with all his might : *Duc in altum !* Then Peter, during this fishing, said a word of faith: "At your word, I will let down the net" (ibidem, nr. 38).

The clear indication of the way to follow, according to the word *Duc in altum* was given by the theme chosen for the 17<sup>th</sup> World Youth Day in Toronto, after Jesus' words in his Speech on the Mountain, just after proclaiming the Beatitudes : "You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world" (Mt 5, 13-16). The Pope gave a marvelous explanation of this theme in his *Message* of July 25<sup>th</sup> 2001, when he invited young people to go to Toronto. It is precisely on this *Message* that our *Eurojam* was based and it was to stamp this theme deep in our hearts that the *Eurojam* started with a suggestive "ceremony of Light" and ended, after the Holy Mass of August 10<sup>th</sup>, with the gift of a piece of rough salt from the mines of Wieliczka to each Guide and Scout, so that they may take them back and never forget their "Christian vocation". We shall come back later, precisely, on this vocation of being "the salt of the earth and the light of the world".

Consequently, it is our duty to study the two documents mentioned above – as we are invited to do it. Both are from 2001 : the Apostolic Letter *Novo millennio ineunte* (from January 6<sup>th</sup>) and the *Message* for the 17<sup>th</sup> World Youth Day (from July 25<sup>th</sup>), and to place firmly the whole *International Union of Guides and Scouts* on the *spiritual line* proposed in these two documents. It seems that the first lines of the Pope's *Message* sent to us in Poland recommend us to do so.

Generous answer to Christ's call to become his witnesses

The second and third paragraphs of the Pope's *Message* (item 2) have a very rich content. So the following interpretation, probably inadequate, is only an attempt, with the humble hope that it may be useful.

When the Pope invites the Guides and Scouts "to answer generously to Jesus Christ's call", who "invites them to put out into deep water and to become his witnesses", we remember this marvelous "daily task" that he gave them, himself, nine years earlier, in Saint Peter's basilica (on August 3<sup>rd</sup> 1994, *Eurojam* of Viterbo), the task of "being witnesses of arisen Christ". About the accomplishment of this task, the more it is constant, the more it is generous and vice versa: it is for every day and all days. We are conscious that many things have been done in this direction, but it is *nunquam satis* ("never enough"): Christ must be more and more announced with pride, especially by each Guide and Scout because, according to the terms of our 3<sup>rd</sup> Principle, "as a son of Christendom, a scout /guide is proud of his / her faith" and "labors to establish the Reign of Christ in all his life and in the world around him". We are talking about the Reign of arisen Christ! We must testify of permanent Paschal joy; enthusiasm and generosity will impose themselves automatically.

"Young people – the Pope says – answer to the Lord with a strong and generous heart! He relies on you. Don't forget it: *Christ needs you to realize his project of redemption!* Christ needs your youth and your generous enthusiasm to echo *his announcement of joy in the new millennium*. Answer to his call by putting your life at His service and at the service of our brothers. Trust Christ, because He trusts you" (July 25<sup>th</sup> 2002, Toronto).

The Church entrusts us with the mission of testifying of Christ and inventing a future with Him

To the young people gathered in Toronto, the Pope said that "the XXth century often pretended to do without the "angular stone" (Jesus), and tried to *build the city of man without making any reference to Him*: at the end, it built this city *against man*, as a matter of fact! But Christians know it: we cannot refuse or marginalize God without *exposing ourselves to the risk of humiliating man*". The Pope went on saying that the "expectation, that mankind cultivates among so many other injustices and sufferings, is the expectation of a *new civilization* under the sign of freedom and peace. But for this motto a *new generation of builders* is requested: impulse not by fear or violence but by the urgency of authentic love, they will be able to put one stone over another in order to edify, in the city of man, the city of God". Here is his hope: "Dear young people, let me tell you what my hope is: *these "builders" must be you!* You are the men and women of tomorrow; in your hearts and in your hands, the future is contained. God gives you this task, difficult but fascinating, to collaborate with Him to the edification of the *civilization of love*" (Toronto, July 27<sup>th</sup>).

The Pope knows that the world in which young people will have to accomplish this mission is a « world that needs desperately a renewed sense of brotherhood and human solidarity », a world « needing to be touched and healed by the beauty and richness of God's love », a world in which « the spirit of the world » "offers many illusions, many parodies of happiness", in which "the thickest darkness... that penetrates into the young people's spirit" takes place "when false prophets switch off in them the light of faith, hope and love". Then "the biggest intrigue, the greatest source of unhappiness" takes place; it is "*the illusion of finding life by renouncing to God*", to join freedom which excludes moral truth and personal responsibility" (Toronto, July 28<sup>th</sup>, homily). All these expressions were pronounced by John Paul II in front of a huge crowd of young people, a joyful crowd that the Pope called "dear people of the Beatitudes" (Toronto, July 27<sup>th</sup>, evening).

A few days before, the Pope spoke of the Beatitudes (July 25<sup>th</sup>)<sup>3</sup>; he ended his speech with a marvelous prayer in which he said, among others: « Lord Jesus Christ, pronounce your Beatitudes once again in front of these young people [...]. Go on teaching them the truth and beauty of the perspectives announced by You on the Mountain. Make them become *the men and women of the Beatitudes*". Once again, at the end of the homily pronounced at the ending Mass of the WYD (July 28<sup>th</sup>), the Pope prayed: "Lord Jesus Christ... make them become a new people of the Beatitudes, so that they may be the salt of the earth and the light of the world".

The « Speech on the Mountain », starting with the eight Beatitudes, impregnates the whole FSE. It is marked by a basic principle according to which "a Scout or a Guide must apply the Promise, the Principles and the Law according to the requirements of the spirit of the "Speech on the Mountain" which is the true charter of Christian life" (*Religious Directory* 3, Statutes of the UIGSE-FSE art. 1.2.7 evoked by the Pope in his Message). The eight Beatitudes wear the symbol of the eight points of the cross that we all wear on our chest and that must be the culture of the heart of each Scout and Guide of Europe (see *Comments to the Religious Directory*, art. 3). By the grace of God, the FSE has been following, since its origins, this "*Magna Carta* of Christendom : *the page of the Beatitudes*", as the Pope calls it (Toronto, July 25<sup>th</sup>). Today, it can only implore the Lord to dare make it worthy to become famous in the "new people of the Beatitudes", forming each boy and girl who are entrusted to it, as enthusiastic "men and women of the Beatitudes".

Basic means to fulfill the mission entrusted to us by the Church

The Pope's message is very clear on this point: first of all, this mission requires developing « an authentic life of prayer, nourished by sacraments, especially Eucharist and Reconciliation ».

## PRAYER

The Pope exhorts us with these words: "it is fatal to forget that "without Christ we can do nothing" (cf. *Jn* 15:5). It is prayer which roots us in this truth. It constantly reminds us of the primacy of Christ and, in union with him, the primacy of interior life and of holiness (*Novo millennio ineunte*, 38).

<sup>3</sup> If some chiefs want to study more thoroughly the theme of Beatitudes (which could be a good yearly program for our spirituality), we mention here John Paul II's homily, during the Mass celebrated in Korazim, Mount of Beatitudes, Israel, on March 24th 2000, and his Speech on the « first » Beatitude (« Happy the poor... ») during his visit to the Fevela Vidiga, Rio de Janeiro, on July 2<sup>nd</sup> 1980.

We must have a *life of prayer* and this life must be *authentic*.

The body lives when it breathes, the soul lives when it prays. Prayer is the breath of soul. This is why Jesus insists so much on "the necessity of praying always, without giving up" (*Lk* 18, 1). This is the only way of living for the soul.

Prayer is authentic when it springs out from a heart full of love. It is the one that Jesus taught us, the one of a son or a daughter who says "Father", of the one who has always God in his heart and who calls him "daddy". This prayer is the one of the Holy Spirit, or better say it is the Holy Spirit himself who "cries: Abba, Father" (*Gal* 4,6) in us. This prayer must never stop and from it all other prayers must come out, overflowing and exultant as love: Our Father, the Psalms, the Angelus, the Rosary, the visits to the Holy Sacrament, the Litanies, and so on, longer prayers as well as Vigils and prayers with a few words, like the one that the tax collector repeated in the temple, beating his breast and saying: "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" (*Lk* 18,13). In the Eastern world, this is called the "heart prayer". And even without words, like the prayer of the sinner who wetted Jesus's feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair (*Lk* 7,38) ; she couldn't speak, she had a painful knot in her throat because of her sins. But she also had a huge trust in Jesus' mercy, a knot coming from a heart now overflowing with love.

As a whole and in each group or unit, the Scouts of Europe are Christian communities and each one should be a "*school of prayer*".

Here is what the Pope says to us:

"Yes, dear brothers and sisters, our Christian communities must become *genuine "schools" of prayer*, where the meeting with Christ is expressed not just in imploring help but also in thanksgiving, praise, adoration, contemplation, listening and ardent devotion, until the heart truly "falls in love". Intense prayer, yes, but it does not distract us from our commitment to history: by opening our heart to the love of God it also opens it to the love of our brothers and sisters, and makes us capable of shaping history according to God's plan (*Novo millennio ineunte*, 33).

What the Pope assesses for the whole pastoral activity of the Church is also valid for us: "It is therefore essential that *education in prayer* should become in some way a key-point of all pastoral planning" (34) of our specific pedagogy of Catholic Scouts, as we give supremacy to vocation, to the holiness of each boy and each girl whom the Lord entrusted us with. No one of them will be able to reach holiness if he does not become a *man of prayer*, a *woman of prayer*. When these boys and girls arrive to the "Departure" and are launched into the world as true Rovers and Rangers, knights of the Kingdom of God, prayer will have to impregnate their whole breath and all their heart-beats. At this point, they should all be convinced that the one who prays never wastes his time, but he saves it and multiplies it to the infinite, whereas the one who "has no time to pray" spoils all his time.

Let us listen once again to the Pope. He tells us that "This training in holiness calls for a Christian life distinguished above all in *the art of prayer* [...]. But we well know that prayer cannot be taken for granted. We have to learn to pray: as it were learning this art ever anew from the lips of the Divine Master himself, like the first disciples: "Lord, teach us to pray!" (*Lk* 11:1). Prayer develops that conversation with Christ which makes us his intimate friends: "Abide in me and I in you" (*Jn* 15:4). This reciprocity is the very substance and soul of the Christian life, and the condition of all true pastoral life. Wrought in us by the Holy Spirit, this reciprocity opens us, through Christ and in Christ, to contemplation of the Father's face. Learning this Trinitarian shape of Christian prayer and living it fully, above all in the liturgy, the summit and source of the Church's life,<sup>17</sup> but also in personal experience, is the secret of a truly vital Christianity, which has no reason to fear the future, because it returns continually to the sources and finds in them new life" (*ibidem* 32).

Undoubtedly, this supposes an education, a natural and progressive breeding, similar to the one made in good Christian families, where the child learns how to pray on his mother's lap, seeing the example of his father, where prayer is breathed at each step, where it is experienced... We start with the simple prayers of good Christians (Our Father, Ave Maria, Angelus, Rosary), creating in the children these good habits; later on, they will become their « favorite prayers » (for instance the Rosary for John Paul II) for their whole life. Gradually, we come to pray with the Psalms, the Lauds and Vespers, with a renewed "*listening to the Word of God*"... in the ancient and ever valid tradition of *lection divina*" (*ibidem* 39)... Everything will be easier if, as the Pope wishes it, in each of our groups and units "more were done to ensure an all-pervading climate of prayer" (34). In this atmosphere, holiness buds, grows and gives abundant fruit.

On this point, the initiative that marked the life of the « bivouacs » (gathering about 150 guides or scouts each) was an example during the recent *Eurojam* in Poland. Apart from the daily Holy Mass in which, during the homily, the priest explained the spiritual theme of the day, we also had, thanks to texts prepared before hand in a booklet, a “second time for the Lord” for each troop or company, led by the leaders. Besides, at the end of the day, each patrol also had a short “third time”, when they gathered at their *oratory* built by themselves. This had been perfectly explained and motivated because the intention was to have the leaders make what is their main responsibility, after all, that is to say to create in their own scout community – whatever small it may be – this climate “impregnated with prayer” which leads each boy and each girl towards holiness, spontaneously, naturally and in total freedom. The fact that the young people, during these triple “times for the Lord” had an exemplary attitude, responsible and natural, is another testimony of the fact that if imposed things provoke reject, courageous and well motivated proposals on the way to holiness are accepted by the young people with a lot of enthusiasm. The speeches of the Pope to young people – let us think of the WYD – always defending evangelic exigency, transparency and strength, show it to us obviously. They also sign the style of our Chiefs in their life of “co-workers of God Educator”.

## THE SACRAMENTS

The Pope tells us: life of prayer must be « nourished by the sacraments, especially by Eucharist and Reconciliation ».

At this point, it seems fair to me to mention our *Magna Carta*, that is to say what the Pope told us on the sacramental style of life in Saint-Peter’s basilica on August 3rd 1994. On this occasion, the Pope reminded to our guides and scouts that they are “are called every day, in their family, at school and in their leisure, to live according to the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation”. As regards Eucharist and Reconciliation, he said:

« In the Eucharist, the community is gathered by the Lord, its Chief. It receives its food in order to progress coherently. Be able to recognize Christ’s extraordinary gift: he comes to inhabit your whole being, making of your body and of your heart a temple that is agreeable to him (see 1 Co 3, 16)! By the *sacrament of Reconciliation*, frequently received, you will discover that Jesus trusts you and loves you infinitely, that the past may be overcome because forgiveness opens a new future. *Thus you will become always purer and more self-controlled*. In a world that offers easy pleasures and deceitful illusions, it is necessary to be able to walk against the stream, taking inspiration in the essential moral values, the only ones that are able to realize a harmonious, prosperous and calm life ».

Since then, these words have guided the whole FSE in the effort of making each of its members, from the Chairman to the youngest “tender food”, according to his age, according to an intense sacramental style, considered as belonging to the bases of “scout style”, as it has to be applied by a Catholic. A lot of things have been said on this point during an international conference of FSE religious advisers (in Rome in 1996), the *Acts* of which are easy to obtain, at least in Italy, in the *Carnet di Azimut n° 6*, in which we also find a good index, a very useful “Vade mecum” to apply the whole speech of the Pope.<sup>4</sup>

## Eucharist

In the Message that the Pope sent us in Poland, he evokes his recent Encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* and affirms, by a sentence taken from it, that « every commitment to holiness... must draw the strength it needs from the “Eucharistic mystery” and in turn be directed to that mystery as its culmination » (n. 60). For us, it is a reminder that should encourage us to put this Encyclical at the basis of all our “pedagogy towards holiness” – this expression is famous<sup>5</sup>-. Without any doubt, this pedagogy goes through the Scout Law but this law must be respected as “by saints” in its evangelic sublimation, and this is not possible if “we do not realize how important it is to live in the Church and to come near to the sacraments” as the Pope told us in 1994.

<sup>4</sup> For the French and Spanish versions, see: Scouts d’Europe, Colloque international des CR, Rome 96, SCOUTEUROPRESSE, Château-Landon ; et Congreso internacional de Consejeros Religiosos, Roma, 15-18 de Octubre de 1996, Málaga 1997.

<sup>5</sup> From C.Favaretto in *Carnet di Azimut N° 6*, p. 49, n. 4.

## Sunday Eucharist – Sunday "The Day of the Lord"

Of course, Scouts of Europe must be very faithful to listening to the Pope's words about « the celebration of the Day of the Lord ». In short, it refers to the chapter on *Eucharistia dominicale* of the Encyclical *Novo millennio ineunte* (nr. 33 and 34), which quotes the previous Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini* dated May 31<sup>st</sup> 1998, on the feast of Pentecost. This message is essential « in order to recover the deep doctrinal motivations which are at the basis of the Church precept, so that the faithful may understand clearly the indispensable value of Sunday in Christian life » (*Dies Domini* nr. 6).

The Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini* is one of the documents that our young people should know very well. It could be the basis of a yearly program of spirituality, for instance in our Fires and Crews, because our young people sometimes, although they go willingly to a "scout Mass", do not attend Sunday Mass without serious impediment; thus they give way to laziness and fall into mortal sin. All our young people must be strongly motivated for the sanctification of *Sunday*, first for an active participation to Sunday Eucharist with the community, as much as possible, but also for all the rest, which constitutes "the celebration of the Day of the Lord".

We find the best comment on this subject in the Holy Father's words, in his Encyclical *Novo millennio ineunte*. Here is what we can read in the Encyclical in the paragraph called "The Sunday Eucharist" (n° 35 and 36):

35. It is therefore obvious that our principal attention must be given to the liturgy, "the summit towards which the Church's action tends and at the same time the source from which comes all her strength".<sup>19</sup> In the twentieth century, especially since the Council, there has been a great development in the way the Christian community celebrates the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist. It is necessary to continue in this direction, and to stress particularly *the Sunday Eucharist* and *Sunday* itself experienced as a special day of faith, the day of the Risen Lord and of the gift of the Spirit, the true weekly Easter [*Dies Domini*, 19]. For two thousand years, Christian time has been measured by the memory of that "first day of the week" (*Mk* 16:2,9; *Lk* 24:1; *Jn* 20:1), when the Risen Christ gave the Apostles the gift of peace and of the Spirit (cf. *Jn* 20:19-23). The truth of Christ's Resurrection is the original fact upon which Christian faith is based (cf. *1 Cor* 15:14), an event set *at the centre of the mystery of time*, prefiguring the last day when Christ will return in glory. We do not know what the new millennium has in store for us, but we are certain that it is safe in the hands of Christ, the "King of kings and Lord of lords" (*Rev* 19:16); and precisely by celebrating his Passover not just once a year but every Sunday, the Church will continue to show to every generation "the true fulcrum of history, to which the mystery of the world's origin and its final destiny leads" [*Dies Domini*, 2].

36. Following *Dies Domini*, I therefore wish to insist that *sharing in the Eucharist* should really be *the heart of Sunday* for every baptized person. It is a fundamental duty, to be fulfilled not just in order to observe a precept but as something felt as essential to a truly informed and consistent Christian life. We are entering a millennium which already shows signs of being marked by a profound interweaving of cultures and religions, even in countries which have been Christian for many centuries. In many regions Christians are, or are becoming, a "little flock" (*Lk* 12:32). This presents them with the challenge, often in isolated and difficult situations, to bear stronger witness to the distinguishing elements of their own identity. The duty to take part in the Eucharist every Sunday is one of these. The Sunday Eucharist which every week gathers Christians together as God's family round the table of the Word and the Bread of Life is also the most natural antidote to dispersion. It is the privileged place where communion is ceaselessly proclaimed and nurtured. Precisely through sharing in the Eucharist, *the Lord's Day* also becomes *the Day of the Church*, [*Dies Domini*, 35] when she can effectively exercise her role as the sacrament of unity".

These are the Pope's indications and this is how we have to behave. On Sunday, even if we are out with our young people in the forest or at the mountain, we must feel this day as "the special day of faith, the day of the Risen Lord and of the gift of the Holy Spirit, the true weekly Easter", and the Holy Mass must be perceived as its "heart" which "every week gathers Christians together as God's family...". All our young people must be educated to these feelings and must feel totally integrated in this family of God and, every Sunday, take part in the Sunday Eucharist either with their scout unit, or each one with his own family when there is no scout meeting. Even when they attend Mass during an outing, they are not an isolated group; they belong to the parish community united to its parish priest. This community is present thanks to the priest who celebrates and also thanks to the chiefs who are considered by the community as their close collaborators in the education of youth.

## Daily Mass

About daily Mass, the whole FSE follows the line given by the Religious Directory (art. 8) regarding chiefs: « They will take any useful decision in order to assure the celebration of the Mass at least each Sunday ... if possible even every day during the camp ». For the Italian Association in particular, this line determines the following instructions in the *Norme direttive* for the two green branches:

For *Girl Guides*: « Mass is the central moment, it transforms the camping place into the temple of divinity and gives every day a sacramental presence of grace and salvation” (ND, p. 22).

For *Boy Scouts*: « The morning Meditation at camp or during the activities – short, succinct and incisive – then mentioned again briefly and synthetically during the daily Holy Mass and at the end of the day, will mark the times of the day lived together » (ND, p. 29-30).

We can say that this line is one of the most committing – and significant – for Catholic European Scouts. The point is a commitment of paramount importance for the way to holiness of our young, requiring upstream and downstream a deep faith – as well as the intuitive faith of the “little ones” – in Eucharist in its three dimensions: the Sacrament-Sacrifice (= Mass), the Sacrament-Communion and the Sacrament-Presence (see *Redemptor hominis*, 20)<sup>6</sup>. Nothing must be omitted in order to educate our young people with considerate attention to this faith, so that they may recognize in Eucharist, as the Pope told us in 1994, “the extraordinary gift of Christ”, He who, coming to live in their whole being, makes his temple of their body and of their heart (cf. *1 Co 3, 16*); may they be full of this “Eucharistic amazement” that the Pope wants to rekindle in all the hearts (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 6); may they be convinced that “In the Eucharist we have Jesus, we have his redemptive sacrifice, we have his resurrection, we have the gift of the Holy Spirit, we have adoration, obedience and love of the Father » (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 60). They will “fall in love” with daily Mass at camp too, they will wish to attend it with eagerness, they will celebrate it as if it were theirs, with all the fervor and dignity of God’s sons and daughters, and if by any chance, in spite of all their efforts to have a priest at camp, they are deprived from daily Mass, they will suffer “hunger and thirst for it”, and the Lord will certainly consider this in their favor. May Heaven agree to lead our young people through this “hunger and thirst” to Mass as often as possible, during the week and even every day. The one who is really strong finds time. Do we want to form holy people? Let us listen to the Pope who shouts to us “let us take our place... at the school of the saints, who are the great interpreters of true Eucharistic piety” (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 62). It is Eucharist that forged all saints.

As it has already been written somewhere else<sup>7</sup>, the invitation to daily Mass comes from Christ himself, as he chose daily bread for the Eucharist. It is this bread, become the body of Christ in the Holy Mass, which the soul needs day after day. The Church often<sup>8</sup> invites us to frequent even daily communion. Generally, the communion is received during the Holy Mass.

In his message sent to the *Eurojam* in Poland, the Pope insists on the importance of “the Holy Mass as the centre and culmination of your meeting as well as of all your meetings”. We humbly felt that the Holy Mass was really at the centre of the whole *Eurojam*. It was lived by the young people every day, in all bivouacs, and the Mass at the sanctuary of Częstochowa on August 7<sup>th</sup> and the one on Sunday August 10<sup>th</sup> gathered all the *Eurojam* round the altar. Thanks to the excellent organization of the spiritual activities of the *Eurojam*, thanks to the bivouac chiefs and to the religious advisers respectively, the young people had been previously really motivated and their participation to the Mass was really perceived by all. There was no sign of “rejection”. Consequently, this *Eurojam* is a consolidation of the line followed by the FSE as regards the daily Holy Mass at camp and constitutes a convincing proof that, with a good preparation, this line is accepted by the young people with enthusiasm and helps them follow the way of good towards holiness. This time, *Duc in altum* was checked as it will have to be checked in “each of our other meetings”. As for Eucharist, *Duc in altum* is the only way really worthy of it.

<sup>6</sup> For the practical application of these dimensions in the FSE units, see *Carnet d’Azimut N° 6*, p. 69-74.

<sup>7</sup> *Carnet d’Azimut N° 6*, p. 72, n. 33

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*

## The Sacrament of Penance

In his message, just after the chapter on the Eucharist, the Pope speaks about Confession, because these two sacraments are closely linked, as he explains in 1979, at the beginning of his pontificate. Evoking the words by which Saint Paul exhorted the Christians to purify their conscience before getting near to the Eucharistic bread, the Pope linked both sacraments as follows:

Nor can we, on the other hand, ever forget the following words of Saint Paul: "Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup" (1 Co 11, 28).

The Sacrament of the Passion, Cross and Resurrection seems to strengthen and consolidate in an altogether special way this call in our souls. The Eucharist and Penance thus become in a sense two closely connected dimensions of authentic life in accordance with the spirit of the Gospel, of truly Christian life. The Christ who calls to the Eucharistic banquet is always the same Christ who exhorts us to penance and repeats his "Repent" (Mk 1, 15). Without this constant ever renewed endeavor for conversion, partaking of the Eucharist would lack its full redeeming effectiveness and there would be a loss or at least a weakening of the special readiness to offer God the spiritual sacrifice (cf. 1 P 2, 5), in which our sharing in the priesthood of Christ is expressed in an essential and universal manner. In Christ, priesthood is linked with his Sacrifice, his self-giving to the Father; and, precisely because it is without limit, that self-giving gives rise in us human beings subject to numerous limitations to the need to turn to God in an ever more mature way and with a constant, ever more profound, conversion (*Redemptor hominis*, 20).

We cannot receive the Communion if we are not "converted", in peace with God and in peace with men. If the Magisterium exhorts us to receive the Eucharist frequently, even every day, as we have seen already, it is natural that the sacramental purification of the soul – which precisely takes place in the sacrament of Confession – should be also frequent. Nowadays, we must insist on this aspect with our young people too. They also live in a world where they have to face "the crisis of 'the sense of sin' apparent in today's culture" (*Novo millennio ineunte*, 37). So we must welcome the Pope's call, asking for a renewed pastoral courage... so that the daily pedagogy of Christian communities may be able to offer in a convincing and efficient way the practice of the sacrament of Penance".

Obviously, this call is first of all for the bishops, but also for all those who have responsibilities in "Christian communities", including ours, at all FSE levels. We must seriously wonder if we have done our best to realize the Pope's wish, entrusted to us in August 1994, that is to say if the sacrament of Penance is "frequently received" among us.

Various practical indications had been given on this subject at the conference of FSE religious advisers<sup>9</sup> in 1996. They are still available and would deserve to be read again. Some chiefs take exemplary initiatives, with the help of *Penitential liturgies and conscience examinations*: they have "prepared" their own units to Confession and they managed to preserve, with great prudence, the full freedom of young people for the contact with religious advisers. However, there is still a lot of work to do to be able to say that the Pope's unforgettable wish about frequent Confession has penetrated our young people's heart.

At all levels, we must promote the *Confession of devotion*, periodically renewed by those who are in the sanctifying grace, Jesus' friends, and who do not need to confess before receiving the Communion. We should encourage our young people to use it frequently, as sons of God, convinced that this Confession leads to holiness. Indeed, the Pope tells us that this type of Confession "has always been a support in the ascension towards holiness in the Church"<sup>10</sup> and he exhorts us as follows:

« We shall also do well to recall that, for a balanced spiritual and pastoral orientation in this regard, great importance must continue to be given to teaching the faithful also to make use of the sacrament of penance for venial sins alone, as is borne out by a centuries-old doctrinal tradition and practice.

<sup>9</sup> See *Carnet d'Azimut* n° 6, p. 75-79 e 84, in which it is noted that « in some countries a new discovery of sacramental life is happening among our Scouts and Guides, particularly among our chiefs », but we also confess that « in other countries we are still under the strong influence of the loss of the *sense of sin* ».

<sup>10</sup> John Paul II, allocation to the Penitentiaries of the four Basilicas of Rome, on January 30th 1981 ; *L'Osservatore Romano* of January 31st 1981, p. 2.

Though the church knows and teaches that venial sins are forgiven in other ways too -for instance, by acts of sorrow, works of charity, prayer, penitential rites - she does not cease to remind everyone of the special usefulness of the sacramental moment for these sins too. The frequent use of the sacrament - to which some categories of the faithful are in fact held -strengthens the awareness that even minor sins offend God and harm the Church, the body of Christ. Its celebration then becomes for the faithful "the occasion and the incentive to conform themselves more closely to Christ and to make themselves more docile to the voice of the Spirit."(194) Above all it should be emphasized that the grace proper to the sacramental celebration has a great remedial power and helps to remove the very roots of sin".<sup>11</sup>

The experience of scouting, a privileged itinerary of spiritual growth,

for the integral education of the person

At this point, we must remember before all what the Pope told us, in August 1994, about the Scout Law:

« The scout law is your ideal. It calls you to develop the fundamental human values: honesty, loyalty, the sense of well done duty, the love of nature and the service to your neighbor. [...]. In order to respect this law, program of a righteous and attractive life, become aware of the importance of life in the Church and of the frequentation of sacraments. »

This text was deeply studied during the meeting of FSE religious advisers in 1996, on the basis of C. Favaretto's conference, and its contents are still up to date (cf. *Carnet d'Azimut N° 6*, ps. 41-55). In his speech, he underlines, article after article, how this Law, « program of a righteous and attractive life », expresses the deep human values mentioned in the previous quotation...

What the Pope said in 1994 is now completed in the second paragraph of the second article of the Message sent to Poland, which represents an ulterior manifestation of the Pope's appreciation of the scout method, in the same line as his predecessors<sup>12</sup>. The Pope considers this method as "a way of great value" which helps to "overcome the temptation of indifference and selfishness", helps to "open oneself to our neighbor and to society", trains to "dialogue, to the sense of justice, loyalty and brotherhood".

It refers to true scouting as such, the one that must be the sign common to all scouts in the world, the one that unites the whole Scout Family, to which we belong and within which we have to work with our "specific pedagogy" (Pope's speech on August 3<sup>rd</sup> 1994).

By the way, we must say that this specific pedagogy does no longer need to be precised for it is clearly defined, in its essential lines, in the first title of the new Statutes of the *International Union of European Guides and Scouts – Federation of European Scouting* recently approved by the Holy See<sup>13</sup>. Without forgetting that the Union was recognized as a "juridical person of pontifical right", which gives today to this pedagogy specific firmness and steadiness. As a matter of fact, for any modification of the Statutes that we could possible wish, it will no more be enough to respect the norms contained in the *Internal Rules* of the Union but we shall have to get the approval of the Pontifical Council for the Laity (*Federal Statutes*, 1.1.2.). So, very concretely speaking, if we would like to modify the texts of our Promise or of our Law, for instance (*Federal Statutes* 1.3.2. and 1.3.3.), - texts thanks to which the Union has wanted to remain faithful to father Jacques Sevin S.J.'s authentic tradition<sup>14</sup>, for instance, the unanimity of the Federal Council will not be enough now; we shall have to get the Holy See's approval.

But let us come back to scouting in general, as « a privileged itinerary of spiritual growth for the integral education of the human being ». About this, it seems opportune to me to remind what is written in the *Comments of the Religious Directory* of the FSE, about the 1<sup>st</sup> article of this *Directory*<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> *Reconciliatio et penitentia*, 32 : *Enchiridion vaticanum*, n. 1997.

<sup>12</sup> See the speeches of the Popes to the scouts, starting with Pius XI's to the scouts of Rome on April 23rd 1922, published by G. Morello and F. Pieri in *The pontifical documents about scouting*, Milan 1991, and the following speeches to the Agesci and to the FSE, easy to find on Web sites.

<sup>13</sup> This concerns the first approval. These approvals, according to the practice of the Roman Curia, are not definitive. They are granted, as in our case, *ad experimentum* for a five year period.

<sup>14</sup> On this point, see my conference about « Jacques Sevin S.J.'s thought and the Italian Catholic scouting », presented at the Symposium about Jacques Sevin, on October 27th 2001, at the Catholic University of Lublin, and published in Italian version in *Scout d'Europa, Carnet di Azimut 2000-2003*, Rome, December 2001, p. 29-31 and 34.

<sup>15</sup> Art. 1. The official text of the Comment in French, dated February 12th 2000, has not yet been published in Italian version. The text mentioned above, in A. Grieco's version, corresponds to the official text published in 1999, previous to the Italian text, in a special booklet (see p. 3 & 4) by the Sicilian Regional Commissionership.

« The scout method was conceived as an education method, as complete as possible, including necessarily religious education. The traditional expression that defines the aim of the F.S.E. has to be understood in this perspective: *to educate Christians and citizens*. For non initiated people, this sentence may seem to have a double aim, with separable aspects. In fact, it means the integral formation of the baptized human person who, if he or she is a Christian as Jesus wants it, has necessarily to be a useful citizen in all fields.

The first aim of the F.S.E. has always been the complete education of each boy and of each girl entrusted to its associations. This means the training of the whole human being, which is to say of man considered in all his dimensions, natural and supernatural. The point is to give a service to man, based on the full recognition of each person's fundamental value, always unique and irreplaceable – as John-Paul II says -, with its complex nature of body and soul, such as it has been wanted by God. The F.S.E. does not pretend at all to “invent man” or to “build” him according to an ideal that it would have invented itself<sup>16</sup>. But it wants to bring man to become more and more integrally what God wants him to be.

For our Federation, “to serve man” means to comply with the Truth on man that the Church receives from the Gospel, announced clearly and so strongly by the Popes' voice. The F.S.E. accepts this truth as its own, and serves it with enthusiasm by collaborating joyfully with the Lord of life, in order to forge each boy or girl who is entrusted to it according to His plan and His love. [...] »

Certainly, scouting has a great value in the FSE. Scouting understood in the perspective of *BP's four aims*, which are also the aims of the other founders of Catholic scouting that could be considered as purely civic education. It is practiced in its authentic purity, in the conviction that this purity is the most adapted to nowadays youth. Nevertheless, in all its dimensions and through all its leaders, the FSE wants to be the “collaborator with God the Teacher” (*Christifideles laici*, 61) in the formation of each boy and each girl who are entrusted to it according to God's project for the integrality of the human being. As a matter of fact, if we define scouting as a method of education, it can be that only in collaboration with “God the Teacher”, an instrument to lead man to the greatness for which he has been created by God for whole eternity.

With all the esteem and the greatest respect for scout associations existing in the world, the FSE feels that it is called always and before all to be an instrument of sanctification. Our *Scout Promise*, our *Mottos*, our *Principles* and our *Law* are proposed in the evangelic light. For this, we act with humbleness, convinced that in this light everything gets its full meaning and goes as high as possible. Indeed, if only Christ “fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear” (*Gaudium et spes*, 22) and if only in Him “man finds again the greatness, dignity and value that belong to his humanity” (*Redemptor hominis*, 10), we may consider that the scout values mentioned above find again in Jesus their full meaning, particularly those which are contained in the Scout Law invented by Baden Powell, so profoundly human and that should remain common to all the scout associations of the world”.

It is in this perspective that the very human scout method is impregnated with the Gospel and we understand why the FSE insists on the fact that the Promise, the Principles and the Law should be applied according to the requirements of the spirit of the *Speech on the Mountain*, as we have said before. It is the *Speech* that constitutes in the Gospel of saint Matthew the chapters 5, 6 and 7, starting with the Beatitudes, immediately followed by what the Pope calls “the requirements of the Christian vocation : to be “ *the salt of the earth and the light of the world*” (see *Mt* 5, 13-16). We also understand why if the Promise, the Principles and the Law must be applied in this perspective entirely directed towards holiness, this is not possible without an intense Christian life, without a lot of prayer and without a strong sacramental life. We spontaneously remember the Pope's words, that he gave us in his speech of August 3rd 1994, when he told us that to have a life in coherence with the Scout Law – understood as a way towards holiness – one must “be conscious of the importance of living in the Church and of frequenting the sacraments”. The Sacraments are the main source of this divine strength without which the way towards holiness would not be possible.

Scouting as a « high standard » of ordinary Christian living  
(*Novo millennio ineunte*, 31)

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<sup>16</sup> Item 9 of the Charter of European scouting, June 15th 1965

About the “sublimation” of the scout method, it would be necessary to read again what is written in the official comment of the *Religious Directory*, article 3. In the text, it says, among others, that the aim of the FSE “is to take part, [...] in the formation of youth, considering the entirety of the person, not only human, created according to God’s image, but also as baptized, that is to say brought by baptism to the “extraordinary dignity” (*Christifideles laici*, n. 64) of a “new creature” (2 Co 5,17), of “adoptive child of God” (Ga 4, 5-6), “taking part in the divine nature” (2 P 1,4), “member of Christ” (1 Co 6,15; 12-27), “co-heir” with Him (Rm 8,17), “God’s temple” (1 Co 3,16), “temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Co 6,19), “child of Light” (Jo 12,36; Eph 5,8).”

Our young people must get used to understanding properly the word “holiness” when we talk to them about this question, in conformity with the educational line of the FSE that gives “the primacy to each Christian’s vocation to holiness” (*Religious Directory*, art. 3). No, they are not asked to “do miracles” but to be themselves miracles in their daily life, a life without rhetoric, sometimes flat and gray, but always lived in sanctifying grace received in Baptism, producing all the effects set out above in the words of the New Testament. For this we must avoid, resolutely and first of all, any mortal sin, for mortal sin erases all that these words reveal, it “kills” this grace to the point that we almost become dead in front of God, as it happened to the Prodigal son. As a matter of fact, his Father had declared twice that he was “dead”, but after that he “is come to life again” (Lk 15, 24 and 32). This happens every time we confess a mortal sin. But after we must do more, that is to say, according to our *Third Principle*, “establish the Reign of Christ in all our life and in the world that surrounds us”, endeavor to reach “the fullness of Christian life and the perfection of charity” (*Christifideles laici*, 30) and become the “prophets of life, love and joy” (Pope’s *Message for the XI WYD*, nr. 8), obviously every day, quite spontaneously, accomplishing the “daily task of testifying of arisen Christ” that was entrusted to us in St-Peter’s basilica, on August 3<sup>rd</sup> 1994. A boy or a girl living in sanctifying grace received at Baptism and testifying every day and all days of arisen Christ and of the joy of Easter, by his acts, his words and his life, represents probably a miracle. In this world, often darkened in black night and without Christ, it is a miracle that rejoices the heart of God, a miracle that captivates each man – even if he does not seem to perceive it -, that fascinates him and that spurs him towards the aim for which God created him. The European Scouts must constitute these “miracles”, and these “miracles” are probably “the salt and the light of the world”.

It seems suitable to end this section with the Pope’s words concerning holiness as “high standard of ordinary Christian living”, words that are also applied to the FSE, for its whole program gives primacy to holiness.

“In fact, to place pastoral planning under the heading of holiness is a choice filled with consequences. It implies the conviction that, since Baptism is a true entry into the holiness of God through incorporation into Christ and the indwelling of his Spirit, it would be a contradiction to settle for a life of mediocrity, marked by a minimalist ethic and a shallow religiosity. To ask catechumens: “Do you wish to receive Baptism?” means at the same time to ask them: “Do you wish to become holy?” It means to set before them the radical nature of the Sermon on the Mount: “Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt 5:48).

As the Council itself explained, this ideal of perfection must not be misunderstood as if it involved some kind of extraordinary existence, possible only for a few “uncommon heroes” of holiness. The ways of holiness are many, according to the vocation of each individual. I thank the Lord that in these years he has enabled me to beatify and canonize a large number of Christians, and among them many lay people who attained holiness in the most ordinary circumstances of life. The time has come to re-propose wholeheartedly to everyone this *high standard of ordinary Christian living*: the whole life of the Christian community and of Christian families must lead in this direction. It is also clear however that the paths to holiness are personal and call for a genuine “*training in holiness*”, adapted to people’s needs. This training must integrate the resources offered to everyone with both the traditional forms of individual and group assistance, as well as the more recent forms of support offered in associations and movements recognized by the Church.” (*Novo millennio ineunte*, 31)

The call to take part in the construction of the new Europe

By his last sentences of the 2<sup>nd</sup> section of his Message, after inviting us “to be faithful to the rich scout tradition”, the Pope introduces the subject of Europe, developed in section 3, by indicating us that such a style of life, as described before, precisely in the FSE, could be our “original contribution to the realization of a greater and

more authentic fraternity between the European peoples, a precious contribution to the life of the societies” in which we live.

Immediately after, in section 3, he exclaims: « Dear Guides and Scouts of Europe, you are a precious gift not only for the Church but also for the new Europe ».

An explosion of unbearable joy moved more than nine thousand Guides and Scouts gathered for the solemn Holy Mass on the big meadow under the Marian sanctuary of Jasna Góra in Częstochowa, on August 7th 2003, when these words were said, during the reading of the Pope's message, that the main celebrant, Cardinal Jozef Glemp, Primate of Poland, ordered to read instead of his homily. Our young people are conscious of the esteem that the Pope nourishes for the European Guides and Scouts, very often proved, in particular in Saint-Peter's basilica in Rome, on August 3<sup>rd</sup> 1994, when he spoke to them, during our second *Eurojam* – they were seven thousand – with a speech that since then constitutes the “Magna Carta” of our specific pedagogy deeply rooted in the Gospel. But the fact of hearing, by the Vicar of Christ on this earth, that we are “a precious gift not only for the Church but also for the new Europe” made their hearts vibrate, filled them on the one hand with the certitude of being “on the right way”, and on the other hand with a deep meaning of responsibility of admitting nothing that could diminish the richness of this gift, but on the contrary of committing themselves with all their strength to increase it more and more. We can only say: Thank you, Holy Father, we shall do our best!

As for the new Europe, that “is being built under our Guides' and Scouts' eyes” – so says the Message – the Pope confirms our call with the same words as in his Speech of August 3<sup>rd</sup> 1994. The European Guides and Scouts are called « to take part, with all the ardor of your youth, to the construction of the Europe of peoples, so that every person may be recognized in his dignity of beloved son of God and so that a society founded on solidarity and fraternal charity may occur ».

About this call, before all we must refer to Attilio Grieco's excellent contribution presented at the “second international meeting of FSE religious advisers” (Rome, October 15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> 1996), published in the *Carnet di Azimut* nr. 6, p. 20-38. This contribution, based on a study of all the Holy Father's speeches about Europe from 1978 to 1995, constitutes the best comment to the words quoted above and it is inevitable for any chief wanting to study with his boys our mission about the construction of the new Europe. For rovers and rangers, this study could be a very profitable “yearly program”.

Furthermore, we must quote the second article of the *Religious directory* approved at the Federal Council of Burg Hohenstein of November 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> 1997 and to its *Official comment* during the Federal Bureau of February 12<sup>th</sup> 2002.

The fundamental text for this section, to be found in the second part of art. 2 of the *Religious directory*, says:

« The unity of Europe was realized thanks to Christianity. Christianity has constituted the animating element of a common European civilization, with differences in its means of expression, but interdependent in its spirit, its social conceptions, its institutions and its patrimony of cultural values<sup>17</sup>. The F.S.E. thinks that Europe may know a renewal of Christian civilization thanks to men who will know that their supernatural destiny goes beyond temporal structures, and who will fulfill the requirements of the Gospel in their everyday life. The F.S.E. wishes to contribute to the unity of a Europe open to all countries of the world, working at giving birth to a new brotherhood of peoples in Christ ».

In the *Comment of the Religious directory*, this text has been commented very clearly, so that it constitutes the best track to fulfill the Pope's wish, pronounced on August 3<sup>rd</sup> 1994 and repeated on August 7<sup>th</sup> 2003. Consequently, it is appropriate to quote here the integral text (in A. Grieco's version) of this comment. The text is the following one:

« One of the originalities specific to the F.S.E. is to have introduced into the Scout / Guide Promise the commitment of doing one's best to serve Europe too. This choice, far from being a limit, is a good occasion of inserting the ideal of brotherhood and universality into the culture of each young person. It also determinates a specific spirituality, closely linked with the “third principle” of the F.S.E., aiming at making guides and scouts

<sup>17</sup> Paul VI : see Audience of November 9th 1963

“proud of their faith” and “always conscious of being the daughters and sons of Christendom”<sup>18</sup>. Although this Christendom must naturally reach universal horizons, it remains above all the Christianity of Europe. The whole F.S.E. confesses its Christian faith, a faith in which the European civilization has been carved along the centuries and in which the values of Christianity have become and remain the essential values of the Christian *ethos*.

In order to fulfill this commitment, the F.S.E. has listened carefully to the Popes’ teachings that, in front of a dechristianization of Europe more and more obvious and dramatic, indicate to all faithful a precise mission: to re-evangelize all the peoples that compose Europe, from the Atlantic to Ural, as well as the European culture, which goes on influencing the whole world.

For this task, our fundamental point of reference is the words pronounced by John Paul II in Santiago de Compostela on November 8<sup>th</sup> 1982, and the words of his speech of August 3<sup>rd</sup> 1994, during the audience that he gave to the Guides and Scouts of Europe in Saint-Peter’s basilica in Rome.

In Santiago – as the Bishop of Rome and the Universal Pastor of the Church -, the Pope had sent a “cry of love” to Europe: “*Find yourself again, discover your origins, revive your roots, live with these genuine values that made your history glorious and your presence beneficent on the other continents, build your spiritual unity again in a climate of full respect towards other religions and genuine freedoms*”<sup>19</sup>. The F.S.E. has received this cry with great emotion as it corresponded with the founding intuitions of the Movement and it felt “attracted in an irresistible way”.

At this point, the *Comment of the Religious directory* quotes again the text mentioned before, pronounced on August 3<sup>rd</sup> 1994 and repeated by the Pope in the Message that he sent us in Poland, and then it goes on as follows:

The F.S.E. welcomed John Paul II’s instruction with a deep gratitude. It has studied its contents seriously<sup>20</sup>, with the firm will to make it concrete at all levels, keeping as a final aim what the Pope himself had wished in another occasion:

« We need heralds of the Gospel, expert in humanity, knowing thoroughly the heart of the contemporary man, taking part in his joys and his hopes, his anguishes and his sorrows, and being at the same time contemplatives filled with the love of God. For this, we need new saints. The great evangelizers were saints. » (Speech to the Bishops’ Conferences of Europe, on October 1st 1986)

These are the men and women that the FSE wants to give as an example to young people. May God help us!

When one of our Guides or one of our Scouts commits himself, by his Promise, « to serve God, the Church, his Country and Europe », this last word must be explained to them in the perspective that we have indicated.

As regards saints, the FSE encourages at all levels the knowledge and devotion to saint Benedict, protector of Europe (since 1964). Since the Bull *Egregiae virtutis* (December 31st 1980) by which John-Paul II proclaimed the saints Cyril and Methodius as « celestial co-patrons of Europe beside God », the knowledge and devotion to these two saints are also promoted.

It is in the spirit of these saints that the FSE wishes to contribute to the construction of an authentically Christian Europe, inserted in the civilization of love and breathing with its two lungs : the Western lung characterized by saint Benedict’s motto « ora et labora » and the inexhaustible dynamism that it raised concerning spiritual improvement and cultural creativity, and the Eastern lung, marked by the deep respect for the two saint brothers towards the diversity and sovereignty of each people and each language.

<sup>18</sup> See Third Principle of the « Fédération du Scoutisme Européen »: As a son of Christendom, the scout is proud of his faith: he works labours to establish the reign of Christ in all his entire life and in the world around him.

<sup>19</sup> Acta Apostolicae Sedis AAS 75 (1983) 330 n.4

<sup>20</sup> For a bigger comment of this item 2, see A. Grieco’s study : « Take part in the construction of the Europe of Peoples », published in three languages : in Italian in Scout d’Europa, Carnet di Azimuth n°6, 2° Incontro Internazionale Assistenti Spirituali della F.S.E., Adel ed., Padova, 1997, pp.20-38.; in French, in Scout d’Europe, Colloque international de CR, Rome 96, pp. 3-23; in Spanish, in 2° Congreso Internacional de Consejos Religiosos, Roma 15-18 Octubre 1996, Malaga, 1997, pp.II-39

In the same way, the FSE educates in the spirit of the co-patronesses of Europe proclaimed in the Apostolic Letter *Spes aedificandi* of October 1st 1999 : Saint Bridget of Sweden, who lived saintly “the ordinary occupations of lay life in the world” and the “high and exacting vocation of forming a Christian family” ; saint Catherine of Siena, above all for her ‘pacificator work for a society inspired by the Christian values’; Saint Teresa-Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein) who worked under the “banner of respect, tolerance and acceptance which invites all men and women to understand and appreciate each other, transcending their ethnic, cultural and religious differences in order to form a truly fraternal society” (quotation from *Spes aedificandi*).

By taking part in the education of men and women of this type, the FSE resolutely stands on the way of rediscovery, safeguard and courageous promotion of the values that Christianity has given to Europe, in the conviction that it is only on these values that the Europe of the peoples can be built, in a society based on solidarity and fraternal charity. By working to make these values being understood, defended and implemented, the FSE is convinced to be at the forefront, above all for all that regards the Magisterium of the Church, it proclaims the evangelic Truth and Christian morals, the dignity of the human being and of human life. Thus the FSE learns, with the “great strategy in favor of life” proclaimed by the Church, in a world in which “we all must build a new culture of life” (*Evangelium vitae*).

Apart from what is presented above, it is necessary to pay attention to the Pope’s numerous interventions regarding a reconstruction of Christian Europe in these last years (1996-2003) which have become particularly urging because of the project of *Constitutional Treaty of the European Union*, in which so far the “Christian roots” of Europe have not found their place. The Pope often speaks about this and his words appear almost every day in

*L’Osservatore Romano* in September and October 2003 (time of the redaction of this comment), under the title « Europe, either it is Christian or it is not Europe ». Here are some references concerning above all the young people. They seem particularly relevant in order to understand better the Pope’s wish expressed to our Guides and Scouts concerning their participation to the construction of the new Europe.

During the welcome ceremony in Madrid, on May 3rd 2003, « in decisive moments for the consolidation of a united Europe », the Pope explicitly evoked his « cry of love” launched to Europe in Santiago de Compostela in November 1982 (“Europe, find yourself again...”). This cry, as we mentioned already, constitutes for the FSE the first fundamental text concerning its European dimension (evoked in *L’Osservatore Romano* of September 19th 2003).

On March 15th 2003, at the end of the prayers of the Holy Rosary with the young people of Europe, the Pope said that « the young people can and must take part in the construction of the new Europe [...]. Especially the young Christians are called to announce and testify of Christ and to be, in His name, the constructors of unity in diversity, of freedom in truth, of peace in justice, this peace that the world of today needs particularly”. And he added: “Dear young friends, tonight I transmit you a wish that is particularly dear to me: may the new generations be faithful to the high moral and spiritual principles that inspired the fathers of united Europe in the past” (evoked in *L’Osservatore Romano* of September 20<sup>th</sup> 2003).

We also add the following text, in order to give also some air to the « second lung » of our European dimension:

At the *Angelus* of February 16<sup>th</sup> 2003, following the feast of saints Cyril and Methodius (February 14<sup>th</sup>), the Pope said: “the inheritance of the saints Cyril and Methodius is also precious from a cultural viewpoint. Their work contributed to consolidate the common Christian roots of Europe, these roots which, with their sap, impregnated the history and the European institutions. This is why we asked to give a place to this heritage common to the East and to the West in the future constitutional Treaty of the European Union. Such a reference will not take off anything to the fair laity of the political structures; on the contrary, it will help preserving the Continent from the double risk of ideological laicism on the one hand, and of sectary fundamentalism on the other hand.” (Evoked in *L’Osservatore Romano* of October 1st 2003).

Certainly, « the new Europe cannot be thought without dipping into its own roots<sup>21</sup> deeply impregnated by faith in Jesus. To consider Europe without these roots means to project a future without Jesus, which is diametrically opposed to what our Guides and Scouts are invited to do in the second paragraph of the Message that we are commenting, that is to say “to invent a future with Him”. This invitation, as can be seen in the context of the Message, concerns not only “personal” projects but also those of the “construction of the Europe of peoples”, to which our Guides and Scouts are called to “take part with all the ardor of their youth”. For the FSE, it is obvious that – once more let us quote the Pope – “to recognize explicitly the Christian roots of Europe in the Treaty becomes for the Continent the main warrant for its future” (Angelus of August 24<sup>th</sup> 2003, published in *L'Osservatore Romano* of September 26<sup>th</sup>). Without Christ, there is no future for Europe.

#### The Marian dimension of our specific pedagogy

In the first paragraph of number 4 of the Message sent to Poland, the Pope remarks that during our first *Eurojam* (in 1984), in which the European Guides and Scouts consecrated themselves to Our Lady of the Annunciation, the « *fiat* by which Mary has answered to God's will has become a central element of the spirituality of Guides and Scouts of Europe, especially in the prayer of the Angelus and the Rosary”. Of course, he rejoices of the renewal of the *Act of Consecration*, which took place at the Marian sanctuary of Jasna Góra (on August 7<sup>th</sup>), which is « so dear » to him, and he expresses the wish that the Angelus and the Rosary may “go on impregnating” the days of our Guides and Scouts, reviving in their hearts “the memory of the marvel of the work of Redemption accomplished for us by Christ!”

As for the clause “in this year consecrated to Our Lady of the Rosary”, that the Pope pertinently reminds in his Message, it is necessary to precise that obviously it cannot be interpreted in a reducing meaning but it must be read in the perspective defined by the Pope in his Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* (October 16<sup>th</sup> 2002) when he proclaims, in this letter, the *Year of the Rosary* from October 2002 to October 2003. The Pope expressed his hope that “during the course of this year the Rosary should be especially emphasized and promoted in the various Christian communities” (nr. 3). Besides, it must be interpreted in the perspective of the whole contents of the letter, for it globally presents a highly convincing exhortation, directed to all the faithful and always heard, to pray the Rosary every day. About families, the Pope exhorts them “to pray the Rosary *for children*, and even more, *with children*, training them from their earliest years to experience this daily “pause for prayer” with the family” (nr. 42). May Heaven help the families discover the Rosary again: “the Holy Rosary, by age-old tradition, has shown itself particularly effective as a prayer which brings the family together”. May they understand that “to return to the recitation of the family Rosary means filling daily life with very different images [not the images of television, mentioned just before by the Pope]; images of the mystery of Salvation: the image of the Redeemer, the image of his most Blessed Mother. The family that recites the Rosary together reproduces something of the atmosphere of the household of Nazareth: its members place Jesus at the centre, they share his joys and sorrows, they place their needs and their plans in his hands, they draw from him the hope and the strength to go on” (nr. 41). If we consider that the specific pedagogy of Scouts of Europe, as regards faith life, is identical to the one realized by good Catholic families, we must also do the same in our units (clearings, packs, companies, fires, crews...). As much as possible, our boys should be trained to recite the Rosary, as a “daily moment of prayer halt” in each unit. On this subject, we must confess that we still have a long way to go. But as Scouts of Europe, we do not lack this courage, if we start gradually – “a decade every day” – relying on the Pope's suggestion to enrich it, in order to promote the prayer of the Rosary : “with appropriate symbolic and practical aids to understanding and appreciation”, “without prejudice to the Rosary's basic structure” (nr. 42).<sup>22</sup> There is a lot of space for the initiatives of our unit leaders, as it has already been brilliantly proved. The Pope's second insurance can be directed towards them: “If the Rosary is well presented, I am sure that young people will once more surprise adults by the way they make this prayer their own and recite it with the enthusiasm typical of their age group”.

<sup>21</sup> John Paul II, Speech to the participants of the symposium « University and Church in Europe », on July 19th 2003, published in *L'Osservatore Romano* of October 3<sup>rd</sup> 2003

<sup>22</sup> Some ideas « to help the boy scouts and girl guides to pray the Rosary » were already suggested in 1984. See booklet *Eurojam* elaborated by the national Commissioners of the Italian Association, 1st Part, p. 13.

Without any doubt, all Catholic scouts in the world venerate most particularly Mary, the Mother of God. Some scout associations express their Marian spirituality on one aspect or the other of the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary, but the *International Union of Guides and Scouts of Europe – Federation of European Scouting* made its choice during its first *Eurojam*, on July 25<sup>th</sup> 19984, when it made its consecration<sup>23</sup> to Our Lady of the Annunciation during the Mass celebrated in the cathedral Notre-Dame de Paris. On that occasion, it was precised – in the text read by the Guide and Scout Commissioners of all countries of the Union, consecrated their branches – that the reasons of our choice were that Our Lady of the Annunciation is:

- The Madonna of the “Yes”, model of our “Estote parati”;
- The Madonna of the Promise, the Servant of the Lord, the model of our commitment to “Serve”;
- The Madonna of spring, the mother of all that grows and germinates;
- The Mother of the Redeemer, who welcomed the mystery of the Cross, that we were on our uniform;
- The “Virgin of light”, the choice of our hearts that guides us towards God.

On this occasion, the Guides and Scouts of Europe recited the following text that constitutes the *Act of trust to Our Lady of the Annunciation*, that we are used to renewing in our groups, every year, around March 25<sup>th</sup>, feast of the Annunciation, and that was renewed in Częstochowa on August 7<sup>th</sup> 2003. The Pope refers to this text in his Message.

« Our Lady of the Annunciation, Patron of Girl Guides and Boy Scouts, Mother of God and our Mother, in answer to God’s love and to Your love, I entrust myself to your immaculate Heart, I put into Your hands my being, my Baptism and my scout Promise so that the Lord, by Your maternal intercession, may transform me into a faithful instrument of His love. I entrust you with my will of living always according to the Gospel and to the scout Law and to serve every day of my life.

Guide me on the way that leads to the Father, through your Son, in the strength of the Holy Spirit. Amen”.

The deep reason of this choice proceeds from the primacy that the Union gives to every baptized person’s vocation to holiness (Statutes 1.2.7), consisting in living in conformity with Our Lord Jesus Christ ; a holiness for which the safest way is the one expressed by the motto *Per Mariam ad Iesum* (through Mary – to Jesus).

Thus, « the *fiat* by which Mary has answered to God’s will has become a central element of the spirituality of the Guides and Scouts of Europe, especially in the prayer of the Angelus and the Rosary », as the Pope says to us in his Message sent to Poland.

By the way, it is suitable to mention that the two booklets called « Eurojam » that the national commissaries of the Italian Association elaborated in 1984 were totally orientated towards this consecration and towards the courageous implementation again of the prayer of the Rosary and the Angelus (Part I) as well as (in Part II) on the central place of the Gospel of the Annunciation (*Lk 1, 26-38*) in the spirituality of the Scouts of Europe, thanks to a specific text explaining the ten articles of the scout Law on the basis of this Gospel and on a « Marian Vigil » focused on the joyful mysteries of the Rosary. Both texts have sometimes been used in summer camps. Besides, the text about the ten articles of the scout Law, mainly revised, was inserted in the booklet prepared for the *Eurojam* in Poland, in order to be meditated by the Scouts and the Guides in their pilgrimage to Częstochowa. So it is easy to find once more.

As for the implementation again of the prayer of the Rosary, beyond the mention of the 140 pontifical bulls marking the history of this prayer, we have underlined that the Rosary is the « preferred prayer » of the Pope (Speech of October 29th 1978), and that various other interventions of John Paul II about the Rosary, already in

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<sup>23</sup> In order not to forget it, we give here again the text of a previous consecration of the Union to the Virgin Mary, during the pilgrimage of FSE Rovers and Rangers in Lourdes, on August 5th 1978 ; of course, this message was directed to the Blessed Mary :

“Oh Mary, conceived without sin and always immaculate as your Divine Son Jesus Christ, today we consecrate to You the International Union of Guides and Scouts of Europe, for the glory of Your Son. We promise on our honor to commit ourselves to be sons faithful to the Church, of which you are the Mother and the Guardian. We choose You as our Mediator, our Sovereign and our Protector in all adversities. Assist our Association in all temptations by your powerful intercession. Keep it in faith and in the unity of Your love so that we may work united for the realization of Jesus’ Reign on the earth.

We pray You : accept the International Union of Guides and Scouts of Europe as Yours, help it in each human conflict and show to each of its members the aim of life : to follow your Son always and everywhere, testifying of His Word and of His Commandments in all the realities of the world.

Full of hope and trust, we proclaim full of joy : praised be the Heart of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, conceived without sin, forever and ever. Amen”

1984, could have constituted a book. So we have given to our young people this encouragement: « Dear Guide, dear Scout! If someone tried to dissuade you to recite the Rosary, for any pretext, answer him, correctly of course but firmly, that on this subject we want to follow Christ's Vicar on this earth, sure of serving thus the modern man as well as possible" (Part I, p. 7).

Thanks to God, we have today at our disposal the Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* that the Pope offered to the whole Church on October 16<sup>th</sup> 2002. This Apostolic Letter should be more deeply considered by the whole *International Union of Guides and Scouts* because it is fundamental for its specific Marian spirituality, and also because it has been written, with the Encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (on April 17<sup>th</sup> 2003), « in continuity with the Jubilee heritage » (n. 6), that the Pope kindly offered to the Church with the Apostolic Letter *Novo millennio ineunte* (January 6<sup>th</sup> 2001), or better said its "Marian coronation" (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 6).

With the specific Marian spirituality of the Scouts of Europe, with the approach of Mary's *Fiat*, a solid and strong spirituality is promoted, in conformity with the scout educational method (*Do our best – Here I am* of the first branches; *Be prepared* of the second ones; *To serve* of the third ones) leading to the service of man without boundaries, according to Christ's commandment and to the Virgin Mary's example. From the "Departure" on, this spirituality can remain fundamental for a good Christian's and a good citizen's life. If it is applied by grownups with coherence, constancy and fidelity, it will dispatch Christ's light in each environment and will probably lead to the realization of each Christian's vocation to holiness.

As we have said before about the motto « *Per Mariam ad Iesum* », this spirituality remains christocentric, according to the structure of *Novo millennio ineunte*. It wants us all, in our "ordinary routine" started after the Great Jubilee, to keep our gaze "set on the face of the Lord" Jesus, to be "the contemplators of his face" (§ 16), "the Son's face" (§ 24), "a face of sorrow" (§ 25-27), "the face of the One who is risen" (§ 28), the face of Christ from which we must "start afresh" at the beginning of the new millennium (*Part III*). But "The contemplation of Christ has an *incomparable model* in Mary. In a unique way the face of the Son belongs to Mary. It was in her womb that Christ was formed » (*Rosarium Virginis Mariae* 10). This is why the Pope has given a new impulse to the Rosary, integrating also the "Luminous Mysteries" (the Baptism of Jesus, the wedding of Cana, the proclamation of the Kingdom, the Transfiguration and the Institution of the Eucharist). About these mysteries, the Pope himself wrote what follows : "Therefore, in continuity with my reflection in the Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, in which, after the experience of the Jubilee, I invited the people of God to "start afresh from Christ", I have felt drawn to offer a reflection on the Rosary, as a kind of Marian complement to that Letter and an exhortation to contemplate the face of Christ in union with, and at the school of, his Most Holy Mother. To recite the Rosary is nothing other than to *contemplate with Mary the face of Christ*" (*Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, 3).

The Pope comes back to the "Marian way" at the end of October 2003, at the end of the Rosary Year, with the following text, that concerns us directly, as ecclesial community : « If... at the beginning of the third millennium, Christians are called to grow as "contemplators of the face of Christ" (*Novo millennio ineunte*, 16), if the ecclesial communities are called to become « genuine schools of prayer" (§ 33), then the Rosary constitutes the privileged "Marian life" to reach this double aim. In its hope to be always more transparent to the "mystery" in order to meditate the "mysteries" of its Gospel, the Church puts itself at the school of Mary. Here is "Mary's way" (*Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, 24), the way through which she accomplished her exemplary pilgrimage of faith, as first disciple of the incarnated Verb. "It is also the way of a Marian devotion inspired by knowledge of the inseparable bond between Christ and his Blessed Mother (cf. *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, 24).

These words were pronounced during the general Audience of October 29<sup>th</sup> 2003. They led to the following wish, that the *International Union of Guides and Scouts of Europe* certainly receives with enthusiasm : « I wish that all believers, together with the Virgin, should take deliberately the way of holiness, keeping their gaze set on Jesus and meditating, with the Rosary, the mysteries of the Salvation. This will be the most precious fruit of this year dedicated to the prayer of the Rosary".

The Apostolic Letter on the Rosary cannot be separated from the one of *Novo millennio ineunte* with which it makes a unity, as with the Encyclical on the Eucharist. These three documents constitute a unique "program" for the Church since the beginning of the new millennium. About "Eucharistic *amazement*", the Pope also writes that, with the Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, he reveals to us that he "would like to rekindle it... in continuity with the Jubilee heritage", that he wanted to leave "to the Church in the Apostolic Letter *Novo*

*Millennio Ineunte* and its Marian crowning, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*. "To contemplate the face of Christ, and to contemplate it with Mary, is the "program" set before the Church at the dawn of the third millennium, summoning her to put out into the deep on the sea of history with the enthusiasm of the new evangelization" (cf. *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 6).

It is up to us to deepen these three documents, to appropriate them, for all that concerns education of life of faith for the young people who are entrusted to us. We must also say that – even if some passages of *Novo millennio ineunte* are not easy to understand for young people – the Apostolic Letter on the Rosary and the Encyclical Letter on the Eucharist can easily be presented to our Rovers and Rangers and constitute for them, with the help of their religious adviser, an exciting spiritual program for two years.

Jesus' support to live scouting in a coherent way, as a means of sanctification

The paragraph just before the conclusion, in which the Pope invokes the intercession of the Blessed Virgin of upon the *Eurojam*, upon the responsible leaders of the *International Union of Guides and Scouts of Europe*, as well as upon all the participants, and affectionately gives his Apostolic blessing, contains a warm call to trust Jesus and a wish, "formulated in prayer", that scouting should be a means of sanctification for each Guide and Scout, leading them to a concrete life lived in coherence with the faith that they profess.

About his call, the Pope knew perfectly well that after such a fascinating experience as the *Eurojam*, once at home, the young people would anew be immersed in a world far from being favorable to live in sanctifying grace; a world in which, nevertheless, they have the "daily duty to testify of arisen Christ" that was entrusted to them by the Pope himself in Saint-Peter's basilica, on August 3<sup>rd</sup> 1994. Do we have to be frightened of that? If we look at our strengths, yes certainly. But "let Jesus' words re-echo in you: « I am with you always, to the end of the age", such is the Pope's call. This is for "every day", our task is a daily task, till "the end of the age". No panic, with Jesus, with his grace, with his constant help, our Guides and Scouts can marvelously accomplish this task, with the elegance of saints. It is important to underline that these words of Jesus are the conclusion of Saint Matthew's Gospel (*Mt* 28, 20), by which Jesus assured his apostles of his continuous help, his presence "near them", in the mission that they received to evangelize the whole world. We are all called to take part in this mission. "All the Christian faithful must direct their efforts to lead a holy life and to promote the growth of the Church and its continual sanctification, according to their own condition" (Code of canon law, 210, CCEO, can. 13) and "to work so that the divine message of Salvation more and more reaches all people in every age and in every land" (Code of canon law 211; CCEO, can. 14). Obviously, the Pope encourages our Guides and Scouts to become "leading characters of the evangelization" (*Christifideles laici*, 46), with "their daily duty to testify of arisen Christ", in this "program" that he has wanted to draw for the new millennium, which is not new and furthermore is not a "formula". Here is what the Pope told us:

« We are certainly not seduced by the naive expectation that, faced with the great challenges of our time, we shall find some magic formula. No, we shall not be saved by a formula but by a Person, and the assurance which he gives us: *I am with you!*

It is not therefore a matter of inventing a "new program". The program already exists: it is the plan found in the Gospel and in the living Tradition, it is the same as ever. Ultimately, it has its centre in Christ himself, who is to be known, loved and imitated, so that in him we may live the life of the Trinity, and with him transform history until its fulfillment in the heavenly Jerusalem. This is a program which does not change with shifts of times and cultures, even though it takes account of time and culture for the sake of true dialogue and effective communication. This program for all times is our program for the Third Millennium (*Novo millennio ineunte*, 29).

"It is the Risen Christ to whom the Church now looks" (*Novo millennio ineunte*, 28).

And it is precisely arisen Christ that the Guides and Scouts of Europe want to be witnesses of, it is He who must be known, loved, imitated, by them and by their surrounding (cf. our "Third Principle").

With his wish, the Pope makes an explicit reference to the new Statutes of the *International Union of Guides and Scouts of Europe – Federation of European Scouting*, which had been in the hands of the Pontifical Council for the Laity for several years and were recently approved (on September 26<sup>th</sup> 2003)<sup>24</sup> by the Holy See, with the acceptance of the Union as juridical person in the Church, with the title of “private international association of faithful”. The Pope refers to the article 1.2.7 of the Statutes which is the following one:

« The UIGSE-FSE gives the primacy to each Christian’s vocation to holiness. A Scout or a Guide has to be faithful to his Promise, his Principles and his Law according to the requirements of the Sermon on the Mountain, which is the true Charter of his whole Christian life.

In this sense, the UIGSE-FSE is called to be more and more a means of sanctification within the Church, a means favoring and encouraging a more intimate union between its members’ concrete life and their faith ».

This text constitutes the first lines of the third article of the FSE *Religious Directory*, later on inserted in the Statutes (mentioned above) at the article 1.2.7, but basically it belongs to John Paul II’s Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici* (n. 30)<sup>25</sup>. The fact that the Pope referred on purpose to the Statutes of the Union may be considered as an encouragement to respect them faithfully. Furthermore, in this text, the Union with all its scouting is conscious of being only a means, that is to say an instrument (in the Italian version of *Christifideles laici* 30, we can read “more and more an instrument of holiness”) of sanctification in the Church, as the Council wants it when it speaks of all the Catholic associations. It says that they “are not ends unto themselves; rather they should serve the mission of the Church to the world”. He specifies that “their apostolic dynamism depends on their conformity with the goals of the Church as well as on the Christian witness and evangelical spirit of every member and of the whole association” (*Apostolicam actuositatem*, 19).

The Pope’s wish that our Guides and Scouts should live with renewed enthusiasm their own commitment concerns scouting understood as a means of sanctification, and that is what the Union has always humbly been conscious of being its way.

The Pope’s wish to have the confirmation that this scouting produces for each boy and each girl a more intimate union between concrete life and their faith, first of all commits all the leaders of the Union - and the leaders of each association belonging to it – to promote this “intimate union” at all levels and, consequently, to be able to eradicate promptly from our ranks any possible germ of “Baobab” contrary to this union.

For this leads to the splitting of the human being, so frequent in our present world, which on the one hand professes the Catholic faith, but on the other hand admits in concrete life some compromises contrary to the morals, which takes its source in this faith taught by the Magisterium of the Church. A total transparency in this aspect is indefectible.

So now we just have to add our prayers to the Pope’s final wish addressed to our young people, to this message “formulated in prayer”. Indeed, the coherence between faith and concrete life is certainly the most difficult thing to do for all of us. It deeply involves our scout loyalty. But once again, to reach it, the way is always Jesus.

The conclusion of this comment repeats what was written before, in 1994 (cf. *Eurojam*, part II, p. 6) : “ to be loyal, look for Jesus, his doctrine and his love : welcome Jesus, all he is, says, thinks and loves ; be coherent without ever dissociating what Jesus is from what you live, the true life which is Jesus and his own life ; be constant on this, pray a lot to be constant, knowing that for us constancy is very difficult, especially in dull days, in tribulations and storm... In any case: courage because, if you pray, God will give you the strength”.

Ivan Žužek S.J., October 30th 2003

<sup>24</sup> « Ad quinquennium » according to the practice for a first approval, whereas the duration of the Union, as juridical person, is ruled by the can. 120 of the CIC, § 1 and by the 4<sup>th</sup> article of its Statutes.

<sup>25</sup> The 3rd article of the *Religious Directory* comes directly from the Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici*, 30, which refers itself, about this subject, to two documents of the Council: *Lumen gentium*, 39-40 and *Apostolicam actuositatem*, 19.