



Address to Youth with Disabilities, St. Joseph's Seminary, New York

On Saturday 19 April 2008, following a Rite of Blessing, the Holy Father gave the following address to the disabled youth gathered at St. Joseph's Seminary (Dunwoodie), New York.

Your Eminence,
Bishop Walsh,
Dear Friends,

I am very happy to have this opportunity to spend a brief moment with you. I thank Cardinal Egan for his welcome and especially thank your representatives for their kind words and for the gift of the drawing. Know that it is a special joy for me to be with you. Please give my greetings to your parents and family members, and your teachers and caregivers.

God has blessed you with life, and with differing talents and gifts. Through these you are able to serve him and society in various ways. While some people's contributions seem great and others' more modest, the witness value of our efforts is always a sign of hope for everyone.

Sometimes it is challenging to find a reason for what appears only as a difficulty to be overcome or even pain to be endured. Yet our faith helps us to break open the horizon beyond our own selves in order to see life as God does. God's unconditional love, which bathes every human individual, points to a meaning and purpose for all human life. Through his Cross, Jesus in fact draws us into his saving love (cf. Jn 12:32) and in so doing shows us the way ahead - the way of hope which transfigures us all, so that we too, become bearers of that hope and charity for others.

Dear friends, I encourage you all to pray every day for our world. There are so many intentions and people you can pray for, including those who have yet to come to know Jesus. And please do continue to pray for me. As you know I have just had another birthday. Time passes!

Thank you all again, including the Cathedral of Saint Patrick Young Singers and the members of the Archdiocesan Deaf Choir. As a sign of strength and peace and with great affection in our Lord, I impart to you and your families, teachers and caregivers my Apostolic Blessing.