

APOSTOLIC PILGRIMAGE TO AFRICA
(MAY 2-12, 1980)

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
AT THE ARRIVAL IN KENYA**

Nairobi
Tuesday, 6 May 1980

*Your Excellency, the President of the Republic of Kenya,
Honourable Members of the Government,
Your Eminence, Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate,
Mr Mayor of the City of Nairobi,
Dear brothers and sisters,*

1. I am deeply grateful for the courteous and cordial words of welcome which His Excellency the President of Kenya has addressed to me. For it is not only a privilege but also a joy to be able to come and visit the people of this country. Hearing these words of welcome, which are the expression of the traditional African hospitality which graces your people, I cannot but feel that I have come among friends, that I have been accepted into your great family, the family of the whole nation of Kenya.

I thank you most sincerely Mr President, for the invitation you extended to me some time ago. In it I have found confirmation of the esteem which you, as Head of this Republic, wish to express for me, the Head of the Catholic Church. In your invitation I feel again your commitment to foster mutual understanding among all peoples and nations. In it I have encountered your deep respect for all men of religion and for the valuable contribution which true believers in God can make to the future of your country and indeed of all nations

Through Your Excellency I greet all your fellow-citizens wherever they may be: in your cities and villages, on your mountains and in your plains, by your rivers and by your lakes. I greet all the men and women of this country, which has been blessed by peace and by the unanimity of its inhabitants in their endeavours to promote just progress for everyone, while preserving a rich cultural identity. I greet the parents and their children, the pride and joy of every family and of the nation as a whole. I greet your elders and all those who are entrusted with the welfare of their fellow-citizens. In a very special way, my heart goes out to the sick and suffering and to all who are weighed down by heavy burdens. Know that there is a brother who has come to you from Rome, one who thinks of you, who loves you and is close to you in prayer. And finally, I wish to extend my warm greetings also to the many citizens living outside the country, for reasons of work or study or service to their homeland.

Wananchi wote, wananchi wote wapenzi - to all of you, the people who live and work in Kenya, to all of you I say: thank you for your welcome and may peace be with you!

2. My visit is also the pastoral journey of the Bishop of Rome, the Pastor of the universal Church, to the Church in Kenya. Your Eminence, Cardinal Otunga, and my dear brother Bishops: allow me to tell you how much I appreciate and bless this moment of my first contact with you on your native soil. You have invited me to come, and in the name of the

Lord - in the holy name of Jesus Christ - I greet you and all the people who are entrusted to your pastoral care.

Today I am in your midst because I want to heed the command which the Lord Jesus himself gave to Saint Peter and to the other Apostles: that they should be his "witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth"^[1]; because I want to testify with you that Jesus is the Lord, that he is risen from the dead so that all people may live. I come to you as the Successor of Saint Peter in the See of Rome to praise the Lord together with you for all the marvels which he has wrought in the Church in Kenya.

3. And now I wish to offer a particular greeting to you, the young people present here, and through you to all the youth of this land! For I know that you carry in your hearts your dreams for the future of Kenya, and in your hands the power to make those dreams come true. May peace and joy be always in your hearts!

I have been told that you make up more than half of the population of this nation; and so, talking to Kenya means talking to you! These then are my words to you today: be yourselves, under the fatherhood of God be upright citizens of your country, worthy sons and daughters of Kenya. Be young people, and reach out to each other in generosity and fraternal service. Be young people, and do not let your hearts know selfishness or greed. Be young people, and let your songs reveal your daring and your vision for the future!

Yes, young people of Kenya, what I have told youth all over the world I now repeat to you: the Pope is your friend and he loves you, and he sees in you the hope for a better future, a better world! My special message to you, and through you to all the young people of Kenya is this: "Always treat others as you would like them to treat you"^[2]. Believe in the power of love to uplift humanity. With courage and prayer, with determination and effort, obstacles can be overcome, problems solved. May Almighty God protect you and sustain you in this hour of challenge and destiny.

4. And to all of you, dear friends, I express once again my thanks for the warm hospitality of your land. From this first moment on Kenyan soil you have opened your hearts to me. In return I assure you of my affection, friendship and esteem. And now I would borrow from your National Anthem those words which so aptly express my sentiments and my prayer at this time as I begin my pastoral visit to Kenya: "O God of all creation, bless this our land and nation" - *Ee Mungu nguvu yetu - Ilete baraka Kwetu!*

^[1] Act. 1, 8.

^[2] Matth. 7, 12.

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II IN THE CATHEDRAL OF NAIROBI

*Nairobi (Kenya)
Tuesday, 6 May 1980*

*Your Eminence, zealous Pastor of this beloved Church of Nairobi,
Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate,
Sons and daughters of Kenya,
My brothers and sisters in Christ,*

1. My first desire in this House of God is to express the Church's praise for the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has gathered us together in his Son, sending forth his Holy Spirit into our midst.

In the words of the Apostle Peter: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead..."^[1].

2. Today in this Cathedral dedicated to the Holy Family - to Jesus, Mary and Joseph - all of us realize that together we make up the Body of Christ, together we are the Church. We are a living Church, a spiritual house made up of living stones - all of us live in Christ. We are one with all our brothers and sisters here in Kenya and throughout the world; we are one in the communion of Saints, one with the living and the dead - our families, our ancestors, those who brought to us the word of God and whose memory is enshrined for ever in our hearts.

Today, in particular, we are a communion of faith and love, confessing Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the Lord of history, the Redeemer of man and the Saviour of the whole world. We are one united community, living, in the mystery of the Church, the life of the crucified and Risen Christ, and therefore his praise is in our hearts and on our lips. It finds expression in our Easter *Alleluia*. We are, as it were, the extended Holy Family, called to build and enlarge the edifice of justice and peace and the civilization of love.

3. Because of this we are challenged to live a life worthy of our calling as members of Christ's Body and as brothers and sisters of Christ in accord with our Christian dignity and duty to walk humbly and peacefully together along the path of life. Jesus himself exhorts us to be, by our lives, the salt of the earth and the light of the world. With him I say to you: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven"^[2].

4. Each one of us has a unique place in the communion of the one universal Church throughout Africa and the whole world. You, the laity, pursuing a vocation of holiness and love, have a particular responsibility for the consecration of the world. Through you the Gospel must reach all levels of society. In imitation of the Holy Family, you parents and

children must build a community of love and understanding, where the joys and hopes and sorrows of life are shared together, and offered to God in prayer. You couples must be the sign of God's faithful and unbreakable love for his people, and of Christ's love for his Church. It is you who have the great mission of giving Christ to each other and to your children, and in this way you are the first catechists of your children. I greet also all the catechists who serve the Church of God so devotedly. And you young people who are preparing for the priesthood or religious life are called to believe in the power of Christ's grace in your lives. The Lord needs you to carry on this work of redemption among your brothers and sisters.

You religious, both men and women, through the profession of the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty and obedience are called to give an effective witness to Christ's Kingdom, the fullness of which is to be revealed only at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. You are called, in a life of joyful consecration and permanent commitment, to be a sign of holiness in the Church, and therefore a sign of encouragement and hope to all the People of God. You are, moreover, in a position to make a great contribution to the Church's apostasy by your activities and your life of prayer. In fulfilling this mission the measure of your effectiveness will be in the proportion that you remain united with the Bishops and work in close union with them. And you, my brothers in the priesthood, yours is a mission of proclaiming salvation, of building up the Church by the Eucharistic sacrifice; yours is a vocation of special companionship with Christ, offering your lives in celibacy in order to be like Jesus, the Good Shepherd in the midst of your people - the people of Kenya.

And finally, my dear brother Bishops, in union with the whole Episcopal College that is united with the Successor of Peter, you are called to exercise the pastoral leadership of the whole flock in the name of Jesus Christ, "the chief Shepherd"[\[3\]](#); yours is therefore a role of special servanthood. You are the appointed guardians of the unity that we are living and experiencing today, because you are the guardians of God's word upon which all unity is based. And, in a particular way, dear Cardinal Otunga, by reason of your eminent position, you are yourself a visible link with the See of Rome, and a special sign of Catholic unity within your local Church. I am deeply grateful for your fidelity and for your devoted collaboration.

5. And so let us all, as one redeemed people, one Body of Christ, one Church, stand firm together in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, acknowledging him as "God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God". With Saint Peter, let us say to Jesus: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God"[\[4\]](#). And again: "You have the words of eternal life"[\[5\]](#).

And on my part as the Successor of Peter, I have come to you today to repeat Christ's words of eternal life, to proclaim his message of salvation and hope, and to offer all of you his peace: "Peace to all of you who are in Christ"[\[6\]](#).

Peace to the living.

Peace to the dead, to all those who have gone before us with the sign of faith.

Peace to all Kenya. Peace to all Africa - the peace of Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

[1] *1 Petr.* 1, 3.

[2] *Matth.* 5, 16.

[3] *1 Petr.* 5, 4.

[4] *Matth.* 16, 16.

[5] *Io.* 6, 68.

[6] *1 Petr.* 5, 14.

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY IN NAIROBI**

*Nairobi (Kenya)
Tuesday, 6 May 1980*

*Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

1. Your visit here this evening gives me great pleasure, for it offers me an opportunity to meet so many distinguished members of the Diplomatic Community. My cordial and respectful welcome goes also to the representatives of regional and international organizations, whose activities enrich this Capital city. I thank all of you for the honour you show me by your courteous presence. I am indeed grateful to the Representative of the Holy See for having taken the initiative to offer you the hospitality of this house, which is also my home during my stay in Nairobi.

I am sure that you are well acquainted with this continent, both by virtue of your office and as a result of the daily contacts that you have with the leaders and the people of Africa. You will therefore not be surprised if *I address my remarks primarily to the African situation* to some of the problems which face this continent.

2. Tonight I wish to recall the prophetic words which Paul VI addressed to the Parliament of Uganda, in which he spoke of Africa as being "emancipated from its past and ripe for a new era".

Standing here in Kenya eleven years later, I dare to say: This new era has begun and Africa is showing itself ready for the challenge! During these years, so much has happened, so many changes have come about, so much progress has been made; and at the same time so many new problems have arisen. Hence, it seems that this is now an appropriate occasion for me to speak about the new reality of Africa.

Many of the African situations and problems that demand our attention today are no different from those that affect other nations and continents in the world. Others, however, are typically African in the sense that the elements of the problems and the resources available for their solutions - natural and especially human resources - are unique for this continent. In this there is *a paramount factor* that must be kept in mind. It is *the true identity of the African*, the African person, the African man and woman.

3. The path that every human community must walk in its quest to ascertain the deeper meaning of its existence is the path of truth about man in his totality. If we want to understand the situation in Africa, its past and its future, *we must start from the truth of the African person* - the truth of every African in his or her concrete and historical setting. If this truth is not grasped, there can exist neither any understanding among the African peoples themselves nor any just and fraternal relations between Africa and the rest of the world, for the truth about man is a prerequisite for all human achievements.

The truth about the African individual must be seen, first and foremost, *in his or her dignity as a human person*. There are present in the culture of this continent many elements which help one to understand this truth. Is it not refreshing to know that the African accepts, with his whole being, the fact that there is a fundamental relationship between himself and God the Creator? Hence he is prone to consider the reality of himself or of the material world around him within the context of this relationship, thus expressing a fundamental reference to God who "created man in the image of himself, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them"[1]. The unique dignity, and fundamental equality of all human persons must therefore be accepted as the starting point for a true understanding of the identity and the aspirations of the people of this continent.

African society has also - built into its life - *a set of moral values*, and these values shed further light on the true identity of the African. History testifies how the African continent has always known a strong sense of community in the different groups that make up its social structure; this is especially true in the family where there is strong coherence and solidarity. And what better insight can be found into the necessity for the peaceful solution of conflicts and difficulties - a way that is in keeping with human dignity - than that innate propensity for dialogue, that desire to explain differing views in conversation, to which the African turns so easily and which he accomplishes with such natural grace? A sense of celebration expressed in spontaneous joy, a reverence for life and the generous acceptance of new life - these are some more of the elements that are part of the heritage of the African and help define his identity.

4. It is against this background that the Catholic Church, in the light of her own convictions drawn from the Message of Christ, views *the realities of Africa today*, and proclaims her trust in this continent.

A few days before leaving on this pastoral visit, I expressed my joy in being able to visit the peoples of Africa in their own countries, in their own sovereign states, where they are "the true masters of their own land and the helmsmen of their own destiny"[2]. In Africa, most of the nations have known colonial administration in the past. While not denying the various achievements of this administration, the world rejoices in the fact that this period is now drawing to a final close. The peoples of Africa, with a few painful exceptions, are assuming *full political responsibility for their own destiny* - and I greet here particularly the recently

achieved independence of Zimbabwe. But one cannot ignore the fact that other forms of dependence are still a reality or at least a threat.

Political independence and national sovereignty demand, as a necessary corollary, that there be also *economic independence* and *freedom from ideological domination*. The situation of some countries can be profoundly conditioned by the decisions of other powers, among which are the major world powers. There can also be the subtle threat of interference of an ideological nature that may produce, in the area of human dignity, effects that are even more deleterious than any other form of subjugation. There are still situations and systems, within individual countries, and in the relationships between States, that are "marked by injustice and social injury"[3] and that still condemn many people to hunger, disease, unemployment, lack of education and stagnation in their process of achieving development.

5. The State, the justification of which is the sovereignty of society, and to which is entrusted the safeguarding of independence, must never lose sight of its first objective, which is *the common good* of all its citizens - all its citizens without distinction, and not just the welfare of one particular group or category. The State must reject anything unworthy of the freedom: and of the human rights of its people, thus banishing all elements such as abuse of authority, corruption, domination of the weak, the denial to the people of their right share in political life and decisions, tyranny or the use of violence and terrorism. Here again, I do not hesitate to refer to the truth about man. Without the acceptance of the truth about man, of his dignity and eternal destiny, there cannot exist within the nation that fundamental trust which is a basic ingredient of all human achievements. Neither can the public function be seen for what it truly is: a service to the people, which finds its only justification in solicitude for the good of all.

6. In this same context of the respect of the dignity of its citizens by the State, I wish to draw attention to the question of *religious freedom*.

Because she believes that no freedom can exist that no true fraternal love is possible without reference to God, who "created man in the image of himself"[4], the Catholic Church will never cease to defend, as a fundamental right of every person, freedom of religion and freedom of conscience.

"The curtailment and violation of religious freedom of individuals and communities is not only a painful experience", I stated in my Encyclical, "but it is above all an attack on man's very dignity, independently of the religion professed or of the concept of the world which these individuals and communities have". And I added that, because unbelief, lack of religion and atheism can be understood only in relation to religion and faith, it is difficult to accept "a position that gives only atheism the right of citizenship in public and social life, while believers are, as though by principle, barely tolerated or are treated as second-class citizens or are even - and this has happened - entirely deprived of the rights of citizenship"[5]. For this reason, the Church believes - without hesitation and without doubt - that *an atheistic ideology cannot be the moving and guiding force* for advancing the well-being of individuals or for promoting social justice when it deprives man of his God-given freedom, his spiritual inspiration and the power to love his fellowmen adequately.

7. Another problem on which the truth about man, and about the African in particular, impels me to speak out, is the persistent problem of *racial discrimination*. The aspiration to equal dignity on the part of individuals and peoples, together with its concrete implementation in

every aspect of social life, has always been strongly supported and defended by the Church. During his visit to Africa, Paul VI stated: "We deplore the fact that, in certain parts of the world, there persist social situations based upon racial discrimination and often willed and sustained by systems of thought; such situations constitute a manifest and inadmissible affront to the fundamental rights of the human person"[6]. In his last address two years ago to the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See, he emphasized again that the Church is "concerned by the aggravation of racial and tribal rivalries which instigate division and rancour", and he denounced the "attempt to create juridical and political foundations in violation of the principles of universal suffrage and the self-determination of peoples"[7].

The truth about man in Africa demands from me on this occasion that I should confirm these statements. And this I do with deep and strong conviction. Progress has been made with regard to some situations, and for this we are grateful to God. But there still remain too many instances of institutionalised discrimination on the basis of racial differences, and these I cannot abstain from exposing before world opinion. Nor let us forget in this regard the need to combat racist reactions which may surface in connection with the migration of people from the countryside to the urban centres, or from one country to another. Racial discrimination is evil, no matter how it is practised, no matter who does it or why.

8. Still within the context of the whole African continent, I would like to draw attention to a problem that is of such urgency that it must indeed mobilize the necessary solidarity and compassion for its solution: I refer to *the question of the refugees in many regions of Africa*.

Large numbers of people have been compelled for a variety of reasons to leave the country they love and the place where they have their roots. Sometimes this is for political reasons, at other times it is to escape from violence or war, or as a consequence of natural disasters, or because of a hostile climate. The African community and the world community must not cease to be concerned about the condition of the refugees and by the terrible sufferings to which they are subjected, many of them for a very long time. These refugees truly have a right to freedom and to lives worthy of their human dignity. They must not be deprived of the enjoyment of their rights, certainly not when factors beyond their own control have forced them to become strangers without a homeland.

I therefore appeal to all the authorities to ensure that in their own nation rightful freedom is always offered to all citizens, so that nobody will have to go looking for it elsewhere. I appeal to the authorities of the nations whose borders the refugees are compelled to cross, to receive them with cordial hospitality. *I appeal to the international community* not to let the burden weigh solely on the countries where the refugees temporarily settle, but to make the necessary aid available to the Governments concerned and to the appropriate international bodies.

9. The presence in this City of Nairobi of such organizations as the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements or Habitat draws our attention to another problem area, that of *the total human environment*. Man, in his aspiration to satisfy his needs and to achieve better living conditions, has created an increasing number of environmental problems. Urban and industrial expansion aggravate these problems, especially when its victims are the very weak often living in "poverty belts", lacking elementary services and normal chances for improvement. I praise the efforts of all those who are trying to increase awareness that rational and honest planning are needed to avoid or redress such situations.

10. The Holy See greets with great satisfaction every effort that is being made to achieve better *collaboration among the African countries* in order to further their development, to promote their dignity and fuller independence, and to secure their rightful share in the management of the world, while at the same time strengthening their commitment to bear their share of collective responsibility for the poor and underprivileged of the planet.

The Organization of African Unity, together with all other bodies which pursue an aim of greater collaboration among the African nations, is deserving of every encouragement. The Holy See was pleased to be invited by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa to establish closer relations, through the participation of Observers at the meetings of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies. It remains ready to extend to other African organizations similar, collaboration, in accordance with its own nature and universal mission, and motivated only by the demands of its evangelical message of peace, justice and service to all humanity and to every human being.

11. It is *my fervent hope that the free and independent nations of Africa will always assume their rightful place in the family of nations*. In the quest for international peace, justice and unity, Africa has an important role to play. Africa constitutes a real treasure-house of so many authentic human values. It is called upon to share these values with other peoples and nations, and so to enrich the whole human family and all other cultures. But in order to be able to do so, Africa must remain deeply faithful to itself; day after day it must become ever more faithful to its own heritage, not because of opposition and antagonism towards others, but because it believes in the truth about itself.

This same truth about Africa must enlighten the whole international community, so that every nation and Government will see more clearly the rights and the needs of this continent, and assume a more determined political will towards enabling the African nations not only to satisfy the basic needs of their people, but also to advance effectively towards their full share of human well-being, without having to accept new forms of dependence linked to the aid they receive.

12. It will be to the glory of this continent and this nation to create *a form of progress* for all its inhabitants that is fully *in harmony with the whole human being*. The true model for progress is not one that extols material values only, but one that recognizes *the priority of the spiritual*. Great and rapid changes are taking place in the social fabric of many nations working towards a better future for their citizens. But no social change will constitute a true and lasting enrichment of the people if it sacrifices or loses the supreme values of the spirit.

Development will be one-sided and lacking in humanity if materialism, the profit motive or the selfish pursuit of wealth or of power takes the place of the values that are so highly practised in African society - values such as mutual concern, solidarity, and the recognition of God's presence in all life.

A growing sense of brotherhood, of social love, of justice, the banishing of every form of discrimination and oppression, the fostering of individual and collective responsibility, respect for the sanctity of human life from its very conception, the preservation of a strong family spirit - these will be the hallmarks of successful development and the strength of the people as they move towards the third millennium.

13. Ladies and Gentlemen, in the pursuit of the well-being of peoples and nations, choices have to be made constantly. There are choices to be made on the basis of political principles and priorities, on the basis of economic laws, or in the light of practical necessities. But there is one choice that must always be made, whatever the context or the field: it is *a fundamental choice - the choice for or against humanity*. Whatever his or her responsibility or authority is, nobody escapes this choice: Shall we work for the good of man or against it? Will the total good of the human person be the ultimate criterion for our actions and our programmes? *Will the African in his human dignity be the path towards a just and peaceful future of this continent?*

It is my hope that he will.

Long live Africa!

[1] *Gen. 1, 27.*

[2] Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Allocutio ad "Regina Caeli"*, die 27 apr. 1980: vide *supra* p.1000.

[3] Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Allocutio ad Nationum Unitarum Legatos*, 17, die 2 oct. 1979: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, II, 2 (1979) 535.

[4] *Gen. 1, 27.*

[5] Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Redemptor Hominis*, 17.

[6] Pauli VI *Allocutio ad honorabiles Viros e publico Legumlatorum Coetu Reipublicae Ugandensis*, die 1 aug. 1969: AAS 61 (1969) 580-586.

[7] Eiusdem *Ad Nationum apud Sedem Apostolicam Legatos, ineunte anno 1978, coram admissos*, die 14 ian. 1978: AAS 70 (1978) 168-174.

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE PRESIDENT OF KENYA

*Nairobi
Wednesday, 7 May 1980*

Mr President,

1. I wish to express my gratitude to you for your invitation to the State House. I am very pleased to have a meeting with Your Excellency and to be able to greet so many distinguished personages of your nation. The few hours I have already spent in Kenya have enabled me to

experience for myself traditional African hospitality, which is a deeply human and warm reality.

In addressing you today, and through you the whole Nation of Kenya, I consider it fitting to pay tribute in the first place to the memory of the Founding Father of this Republic, the late President, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, who completed his life of service to his people less than two years ago. In the eulogy which you delivered during the State funeral of the one you called "my father, my teacher and my leader", you summed up the meaning of his contribution in the following words: "In life, Mzee Kenyatta championed justice and equality. He advocated respect for human dignity and the preservation of our culture. His concern for the welfare of all Kenyans was deep and binding. We are all indebted to him...". During the early years of this nation, he achieved unity, created a spirit of brotherhood, and instilled the determination to go on building the nation through the common efforts of all. He left to Kenya *a beautiful heritage and a challenging programme*.

2. Respect for human dignity, for the dignity of every man, woman and child, for the dignity that all human beings possess not because it has been conferred on them by their fellowmen but because they have received it from God: this is *the fundamental attitude to be adopted if real progress is to be made*. It is precisely in this conviction and in this commitment to the dignity of every human being that the Church and the State find themselves on the same path.

I know, Mr President, that on many occasions you have publicly expressed your appreciation of the contribution which the Catholic Church in your country makes to the advancement of the peoples. This, together with the existence of good relations between your nation and the Holy See, together also with the collaboration which exists in the field of education, health care and other areas of human development, is reason for much satisfaction. It also augurs well for the future.

3. On this occasion, I wish to repeat that *the Church is deeply concerned for all the needs of the people*. Precisely because she values so highly the dignity of every human being, the Church will always continue to exercise her mission, in accordance with her own nature, for the real good of man and society, and for the benefit of the whole human person.

In this spirit, the Church contributes to development, unity, brotherhood and peace among people and among nations. For this reason, the Church will raise her voice and call upon her sons and daughters every time that the conditions of life of individuals and communities are not truly human, every time they are not in accord with human dignity. This too is a reason why I have undertaken my first journey through the African continent: to proclaim the dignity and basic equality of all human beings and their right to the full development of their personality in every sphere, material as well as spiritual.

Mr President, I should like this brief meeting with you and with all your distinguished guests to be for each and every one, for all the people of Kenya, a fraternal encouragement to advance along the people of Kenya, a fraternal May God, the Creator of man and nature, accompany you in your endeavours to lead Kenya forward, to build a prosperous Africa, and to construct a world community in unity, justice and peace.

HOMILY OF JOHN PAUL II

Nairobi (Kenya), 7 May 1980

*Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate,
Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,*

1. We gather here today to give praise and glory to our heavenly Father. We come together in this place, men and women of many different backgrounds, and yet all united in him "who holds all things in unity", all united at the table of God's word and at the altar of Sacrifice.

My heart is filled with gratitude to God for this day and for this opportunity to celebrate the Eucharist with you, to sing praise to the Lord for having reconciled everything to himself, "making peace by his death on the cross".

On the day Jesus was crucified, he told Pilate: "I was born for this, I came into the world for this: to bear witness to the truth". Jesus came not to do his own will but the will of his heavenly Father. By his words, by his deeds, by his very existence he bore witness to the truth. In Jesus the tyranny of deceit and falsehood, the tyranny of lies and error, the tyranny of sin was defeated. For Christ is the living Word of divine truth who promised: "If you make my word your home you will indeed be my disciples, you will learn the truth and the truth will make you free".

2. The Church has received this same mission from Christ: to cultivate a deep love and veneration for the truth and to combine with faith the insights of learning and human wisdom - in all things to bear witness to the truth. In every age and in every land the Church proceeds in this mission, confident that if God is the supreme source of all truth, there can be no opposition between natural wisdom and the truths of faith.

All of the faithful, dear brothers and sisters, have a role to play in the Church's mission on behalf of truth. That is why I stated in my Encyclical that the "Church's responsibility for divine truth must be increasingly shared in various ways by all, including the specialists in various disciplines, those who represent the natural sciences and letters, doctors, jurists, artists and technicians, teachers at various levels and with different specializations. As members of the; People of God, they all have their own part to play in Christ's prophetic mission and service of divine truth". Within the communion of the faithful, and especially within the local Christian community, careful attention should be given to this responsibility to bear witness to the truth. In his Message to Africa my predecessor Paul VI addressed a special word to the intellectuals of this continent, precisely because he was convinced of the importance of their mission at the service of truth. And his words still ring out today: "Africa needs you, your study, your research, your art and your teaching.... You are the prism through which the new ideas and cultural changes can be interpreted and explained to all. Be sincere, faithful to truth and loyal".

3. We must begin our witness to truth by cultivating a hunger for the word of God, a desire to receive and take to heart the life-giving message of the Gospel in all its fullness. When you listen attentively to the voice of the Saviour and then put in into practice, you are indeed

sharing in the Church's mission at the service of truth. You are bearing witness to the world that you firmly believe the promise God made through Isaiah: "As the rain and the snow come down from the heavens and do not return without watering the earth, making it yield and giving growth to provide seed for the sower and bread for the eating, so the word that goes from my mouth does not return to me empty, without carrying out my will and succeeding in what it was sent to do" . You can be messengers of the truth only if you are first of all true listeners to God's word.

4. When Pilate asked Jesus whether he was a king, his response was clear and unambiguous: "Mine is not a kingdom of this world" . Christ came to bring life and salvation to every human being: his mission was not in the social, economic or political order. Likewise Christ did not give the Church a mission which is social, economic or political; but rather a religious one . Yet it would be a mistake to think that the individual Christian should not be involved in these areas of life in society. On this point, the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council were very clear: "One of the gravest errors of our time is the dichotomy between the faith which many profess and the practice of their daily lives... The Christian who neglects his temporal duties neglects his duties towards his neighbour, neglects God himself, and endangers his eternal salvation" .

Christians therefore, and especially you who are laity, are called by God to be involved in the world in order to transform it according to the Gospel. In carrying out this task, your own personal commitment to truth and honesty plays an important role, because a sense of responsibility for the truth is one of the fundamental points of encounter between the Church and society, between the Church and each man and woman . The Christian faith does not provide you with ready made solutions to the complex problems affecting contemporary society. But it does give you deep insights into the nature of man and his needs, calling you to speak the truth in love, to take up your responsibilities as good citizens and to work with your neighbours to build a society where true human values are nourished and deepened by a shared Christian vision of life.

5. One of these areas which holds a very important place in society and in the total vocation of every human person is culture. "It is a fact bearing on the very person of man that he can come to an authentic and full humanity only through culture, that is, through the cultivation of natural goods and values. Wherever human life therefore is involved, nature and culture are very intimately connected" . A Christian will gladly collaborate in the promotion of true culture, for he knows that the Good News of Christ reinforces in man the spiritual values which are at the heart of the culture of every people and of every period of history. The Church, which feels at home in every culture, without exclusively making her own any culture, encourages her sons and daughters who are active in schools, universities and other institutions of learning to give their best to this activity. By harmonizing those values which are the unique heritage of each people or group with the content of the Gospel, the Christian will help his or her own people to achieve true freedom and the capacity to face the challenges of the times. Every Christian, united with Christ in the mystery of Baptism, will endeavour to conform to the Father's plan for his Son: "to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth" .

6. Another important challenge for the Christian is that of the political life. In the State citizens have a right and duty to share in the political life. For a nation can ensure the common good of all, and the dreams and aspirations of its different members, only to the extent that all

citizens in full liberty and with complete responsibility make their contributions willingly and selflessly for the good of all.

The duties of the good Christian citizen involve more than shunning corruption, more than not exploiting others; these duties include positively contributing to the establishment of just laws and structures that foster human values. If the Christian finds injustice or anything that militates against love, peace and unity in society, he or she must ask: "Where have I fallen short? What have I done wrong? What did I fail to do that the truth of my vocation called me to do? Did I sin by omission?".

7. Here today in Kenya, as I have done many times before, I wish to address a particular message to married couples and to families. The family is the fundamental human community; it is the first and vital cell of any society. Thus the strength and vitality of any country will only be as great as the strength and vitality of the family within that country. No group has a greater impact on a country than the family. No group has a more influential role in the future of the world.

For this reason, Christian couples have an irreplaceable mission in today's world. The generous love and fidelity of husband and wife offer stability and hope to a world torn by hatred and division. By their lifelong perseverance in life-giving love they show the unbreakable and sacred character of the sacramental marriage bond. At the same time it is the Christian family that most simply and profoundly promotes the dignity and worth of human life from the moment of conception.

The Christian family is also the domestic sanctuary of the Church. In a Christian home various aspects of the whole Church are found, such as mutual love, attentiveness to God's word and prayer together. The home is a place where the Gospel is received and lived, and the place from which the Gospel radiates. Thus the family offers daily witness, even without words, to the truth and grace of the word of God. For this reason, I stated in my Encyclical "Married people... must endeavour with all their strength to persevere in their matrimonial union, building up the family community through the witness of love and educating new generations of men and women capable in their turn of dedicating the whole of their lives to their vocation, that is to say, to the 'kingly service' of which Jesus Christ has offered us the example and the most beautiful model" .

8. Beloved brothers and sisters: all the families that make up the Church and all the individuals that make up the families - all of us together are called to walk with Christ, bearing witness to his truth in the circumstances of our daily lives. In doing this we can permeate society with the leaven of the Gospel, which alone can transform it into Christ's Kingdom - a Kingdom of truth and life, a Kingdom of holiness and grace, a Kingdom of justice, love and peace! Amen.

***MEETING OF JOHN PAUL II
WITH THE OTHER CHRISTIAN CHURCHES
AND COMMUNITIES OF KENYA***

*Nairobi
Wednesday, 7 May 1980*

*Dear brothers and sisters from the Christian Churches
and Communities of Kenya,*

"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ"[1].

1. I have come to Kenya to be with the Bishops and people of the Catholic Church, since my task as Bishop of Rome is a fraternal service of unity to support them in their fidelity to the Gospel and in their life in the one Catholic Communion. Humbly I see it as part of this ministry that I should also come to greet you, "holy brethren, who share in a heavenly call"[2], for, despite those factors that still divide us, we are nevertheless linked by a real fellowship that remains true even though it is still imperfect[3].

2. Because of this one Baptism, in which we profess one basic faith that Jesus is Lord and that God raised him from the dead[4], we stand together before the world of today with a common responsibility which stems from obedience to Christ. This common responsibility is so real and so important that it must impel us to do all we can, as a matter of urgency, to resolve the divisions that still exist between us, so that we may fulfil the will of Christ for the perfect unity of his followers.

Without full organic unity, Christians are unable to give a satisfactory witness to Christ, and their division remains a scandal to the world, and especially to the young Churches in mission lands.

Your presence here testifies to a deep insight: that especially in the young Churches of Africa, in a continent that hungers and thirsts for God - a longing that can be fulfilled only in Christ - the common apostolic faith in Christ the Saviour must be held and manifested, for in Christ there can be no division. Your presence, together with the sincere ecumenical efforts which are developing, show our common desire for full unity. For truly the credibility of the Gospel message and of Christ himself is linked to Christian unity.

3. This is why, at international level, many of your Churches are now engaged in a theological dialogue with the Catholic Church - a dialogue that is already offering new hope for much greater understanding among us. This is also why, here in Kenya, the Christian people are striving to reach one mind in the faith of Christ. For whether they live in Africa or in Europe, in Asia or in America, Christians are the heirs of sad divisions. These divisions have to be first faced in a dialogue of mutual understanding and esteem, "speaking the truth in love"[5] and then dealt with in accordance with the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

This task is, I repeat, an urgent one. Jesus calls us to bear witness to him and to his saving work.

We can do this adequately only when we are completely united in faith and when we speak his word with one voice, a voice that rings with that warm vitality which characterizes the whole Christian community when it lives together in full communion.

4. Our divisions impair that vitality and prevent our neighbours from hearing the Gospel as they should. And yet, even now, thanks to what we already have in common, it is possible for us, despite those divisions, to give a sincere even if limited witness together before a world that so sorely needs to hear that message of love and hope which is the Good News of the

salvation won for all mankind by Jesus Christ, who "was crucified in weakness but lives by the power of God"[6]. It is possible for us to collaborate frequently in the cause of the Gospel. Although we cannot yet do everything together - especially the fullness of Eucharistic worship - we can still accomplish much together.

Wherever possible, then, let us find ways of engaging in acts of common witness, be it in joint Bible work, in promoting human rights and meeting human needs, in theological dialogue, in praying together when opportunity allows - as it does so beautifully today - or in speaking to others about Jesus Christ and his salvation. As we do these things we must continue to ask the Holy Spirit for light and strength to conform perfectly to God's holy will for his Church.

5. The task that faces Christians as we near the end of the twentieth century is indeed a mighty challenge, and it is good to see how much is already being done by divine grace to respond to it.

May this response grow and develop in every part of the world. It is in this hope that I earnestly pray to God our Father that the Churches and Communities you represent, and the All African Council of Churches and the Christian Council of Kenya, of which so many of you are members, may be ever more faithful servants of Christ's will that all of us who believe in him may be one even as he and his Father are one. May you "stand firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the Gospel"[7] for the glory of the Most Holy Trinity: the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

[1] *Rom.* 1, 7.

[2] *Hebr.* 3, 1.

[3] Cfr. *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 3.

[4] Cfr. *Rom.* 10, 9.

[5] *Eph.* 4, 15.

[6] *2 Cor.* 13, 4.

[7] *Phil.* 1, 27.

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
DURING HIS VISIT TO THE CARMEL**

*Nairobi (Kenya)
Wednesday, 7 May 1980*

Dear Sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ,

1. Being your neighbour for two days, I could not fail to come and visit your Carmel. It gives me great joy to know that, near the house of the Pope's Representative, there is a house of prayer where God's praises are constantly sung and where the sacrifice of your cloistered life is offered in joyful generosity to the Father. The fact that other contemplative communities in Kenya have gathered here with you gives me added joy. My dear Sisters, I bring you the greetings and love of the whole Church, and I thank you for your contribution to evangelization and for the inspiration of your lives. Yes, it is a great tribute to the grace of God and to the power of the death and Resurrection of the Lord that many years ago the contemplative religious life took root in African soil, bringing forth abundant fruits of justice and holiness of life. You are indeed the recipients of a particular gift from God: the contemplative vocation in the Church. The introduction of the contemplative life in a local Church is an important indication of the dynamic implantation of the Gospel in the heart of a people. This is a sign which, together with missionary activity, shows the maturity of the local Church. To live the holiness of Christ and to share the ardent desire of his heart - "I must preach the Good News of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose"[1] - these are hallmarks of Christ's Church.

2. Here in the heart of Kenya you are called to fulfil your exalted mission in the Body of Christ: to perpetuate Christ's life of prayer and loving immolation. The Church has learned from her Founder - and centuries of experience have confirmed her profound conviction - that union with God is vitally necessary for fruitful activity. Jesus has told us: "I am the vine, you are the branches... apart from me you can do nothing"[2].

The Church is deeply aware, and without hesitation she forcefully proclaims, that there is an intimate connection between prayer and the spreading of the Kingdom of God, between prayer and the conversion of hearts, between prayer and the fruitful reception of the saving and uplifting Gospel message. This alone is enough to assure you and all contemplative religious throughout the world just how necessary your role is in the Church, just how important your service is to your people, just how great your contribution is to the evangelization of Kenya and all Africa.

3. In your lives of prayer, moreover, Christ's praise of his Eternal Father goes on. The totality of his love for his Father and of his obedience to the Father's will is reflected in your own radical consecration of love. His selfless immolation for his Body, the Church, finds expression in the offering of your lives in union with his sacrifice. The renunciation involved in your vocation shows the primacy of Christ's love in your lives. In you the Church gives witness to her fundamental function, which is, as I said in my Encyclical: "To point the awareness and experience of the whole of humanity towards the mystery of God..."[3].

4. Your lives and your activities are very much a part of the whole Church; they are in the Church and for the Church. You live in the very heart of the Church as did Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus and so many other contemplative nuns throughout the Church's. And as you pursue your vocation in fidelity to the Christ who called you, you remain spiritually very close to your families and the communities from which you come.

As you live out your lives totally for Jesus Christ, your spouse, and for all who have been called to life in him - the entire Christian family - you can rightly feel near to all your brothers and sisters as they strive for salvation and the fullness of human dignity. In your lives of material detachment and in the earnest work that you perform each day, you show your

solidarity with the whole working community to whose service you are called. And through your prayers and the fruitfulness of your spiritual activities you are in a position to contribute effectively to the great cause of justice and peace and to the human advancement of countless men and women. Through your cloistered lives children are brought to Christ, the sick are comforted, the needy assisted, human hearts reconciled and the poor have the Gospel preached to them.

In certain places in Africa, a monastery of contemplative religious has been established in the vicinity of the major seminary. Is it not especially meaningful that those who saw the necessity of promoting vocations to the priesthood, so as to enable the young churches to become fully implanted in the native soil, also professed their conviction that only the grace of God, humbly sought in constant prayer, could sustain the fervour of the priesthood? I ask you therefore, as a special request on this occasion, to make it one of the primary intentions of your prayers, to beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest^[4], and to bless his Church in Africa with many good, generous, and committed priests, whose example of a holy and truly pastoral life constitutes the best guarantee for the life of the Church and the propagation of the faith.

5. Yours is then a truly important life of faith in Jesus Christ. In the words of Saint Peter: without having seen him, you love him; though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with unutterable and exalted joy^[5]. And precisely because of this, your lives become lives of great service to the Church. With Mary you are called to meditate on the word of God, and to cooperate in bringing forth to spiritual life those who believe in Christ. For you therefore the future is clear. You are on the right path - the path of total joyful consecration to Jesus Christ and of loving service to all your brothers and sisters in Africa and throughout the Church.

Dear Sisters: in all your efforts to walk with Mary and to ascend the mountain that is Christ by loving more deeply and serving more generously, remember that "your life is hid with Christ in God"^[6] for the glory of the Most Holy Trinity: the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

[1] *Luc.* 4, 43.

[2] *Io.* 15, 5.

[3] Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Redemptor Hominis*, 10.

[4] Cfr. *Matth.* 9, 38.

[5] *1 Petr.* 1, 8.

[6] *Col.* 3, 3.

GREETINGS OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE HINDU COMMUNITY

*Nairobi (Kenya)
Wednesday, 7 May 1980*

Dear Friends,

The presence here today of members of the Hindu community gives me great pleasure. In visiting the people of Kenya, I am happy to become acquainted with all those who live in this land and have a part in the life of this nation.

Your own roots are found in the venerable history of Asia, for which I have much respect and esteem. In greeting you I willingly recall the fact that the Second Vatican Council, in its Declaration “*Nostra Aetate*” manifested the fraternal attitude of the whole Catholic Church to non-Christian religions. In this she showed her task of fostering unity and love among individuals and nations and her commitment to advance fellowship among all human beings. Special reference in the document was made to Hinduism and to the religious values embraced by its followers.

And today the Catholic Church is willingly associated with all her brethren in a dialogue on the mystery of man and the mystery of God. The purpose of life, the nature of good, the path to happiness, the meaning of death and the end of our human journey - all these truths form the object of our common service of man in his many needs, and to the promotion of his full human dignity.

And under the sign of this human dignity and brotherhood I greet you today with sincerity and fraternal love.

MEETING OF JOHN PAUL II WITH THE MUSLIM LEADERS

Nairobi (Kenya), 7 Mai 1980

Dear Friends,

1. During my visit to Kenya I am very pleased to be able to greet a group of Muslim leaders. Your coming here today is deeply appreciated as an expression of your fraternal courtesy and respect.

Be assured that I reciprocate these sentiments in your regard and towards all the Muslim people of this land.

2. On other occasions I have spoken of the religious patrimony of Islam and of its spiritual values. The Catholic Church realizes that the element of worship given to the one, living, subsistent, merciful and almighty Creator of heaven and earth is common to Islam and herself, and that it is a great link uniting all Christians and Muslims. With great satisfaction she also notes, among other elements of Islam which are held in common, the honour attributed to Jesus Christ and his Virgin Mother. As the Catholic Church makes every effort to sustain religious dialogue with Islam on the basis of existing bonds, which she endeavours ever more to reflect on, she likewise extends the invitation that her own heritage be fully known, especially to those who are spiritually attached to Abraham, and who profess monotheism.

3. On my part I wish therefore to do everything possible to help develop the spiritual bonds between Christians and Muslims.

Prayer, almsgiving and fasting are highly valued in both of our respective traditions and are beyond doubt a splendid witness to a world that runs the risk of being absorbed by materialism. Our relationship of reciprocal esteem and the mutual desire for authentic service to humanity urge us on to joint commitments in promoting peace, social justice, moral values and all the true freedoms of man.

4. It is in this perspective that our meeting today offers us much hope. May it prove beneficial to humanity and give glory to God, who made us in his image and likeness, and who has revealed himself to us.

With renewed sentiments of brotherhood I would ask you to carry my greetings to all the communities from which you come. Thank you again.

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE BISHOPS OF OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES
VISITING KENYA**

*Nairobi
Wednesday, 7 May 1980*

My dear Brothers in the Episcopate,

1. It is a great pleasure for me to greet you here today. You have come as visitors to Kenya to show your solidarity with your brother Bishops and with their people. Since this is an extraordinary ecclesial celebration for them, you have wished to be close to them in the joy of the faith. In coming, you have brought with you not only the fellowship of your own local Churches, but *a special manifestation of Catholic unity*. And because you are members of the universal College of Bishops united with the Successor of Peter, you bear collective pastoral responsibility for the good of the whole Church and for her pastoral activities throughout the world. Hence, with an awareness of the deep reality of the Episcopate you have gathered in prayerful and fraternal solidarity.

2. Our being together today evokes quite naturally a consideration of our common ministry, our shared responsibility and our common likeness to Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word and the High Priest of the New Testament.

In Jesus Christ the Son of God we find *a fundamental insight into our deepest Christian identity*. In Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd we have a full perception - in simplicity and profundity - of all pastoral ministry in the Church of God. In Jesus Christ the Suffering Servant we discern the complete meaning of a sacrificial life. In Jesus Christ the Risen Lord we comprehend the final goal of the Paschal Mystery - to which all our preaching and catechesis are directed.

3. All I wish to do in these moments with you is to direct my thoughts and yours to Jesus Christ - to him who is *Unigenitus Dei Filius*, but who has become *Primogenitus in multis fratribus*[1]. This Son of God, this Son of Mary, this Priest and Victim of Redemption *explains us to ourselves and declares the meaning of our ministry today and always*: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever"[2].

As he called his Apostles, so he has also called us: to be his companions, to remain in his love, and to proclaim his Gospel. And in our full pastoral role as successors of the Apostles we are called to communicate Christ to our people. Sharing in his Sonship by divine adoption, we are instruments of grace for others, as we lead our people to the fullness of his life revealed in the mystery of the Church, the Body of Christ.

4. Our identity and our mission, as well as the term of our mission, are all linked to Christ in his Sonship; we are conformed to him. Because of this likeness to Christ, we have great joy and comfort *in living two dynamic aspects of Christ's life*. With Christ we are conscious of loving the Father; his words pervade our consciousness and our daily activity as Bishops: "*I love the Father*"[3].

At the same time each of us in Christ can say: "*The Father loves me*", precisely because Jesus has said: "the Father loves the Son"[4]. This awareness of being in Christ, of loving his Father and being loved by him is a *source of pastoral strength*. It confirms the meaning of our lives. It is a reason for thanksgiving to the Father and for endless praise of Jesus Christ.

Dear brother Bishops: -In the months and years ahead, may it bring us gladness to recall that in Kenya we manifested our episcopal unity together *by praising Jesus Christ* the Eternal Son of God.

To him be glory for ever, with the Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

[1] *Rom.* 8, 29.

[2] *Hebr.* 13, 8.

[3] *Io.* 14, 30.

[4] *Ibid.* 3, 35.

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE BISHOPS OF KENYA

*Nairobi
Wednesday, 7 May 1980*

Venerable and dear Brothers in our Lord Jesus Christ,

1. Today during this easter season it is a cause of deep joy and a source of pastoral strength for us to assemble in Nairobi, to gather together in the name of Jesus who said: "I am the resurrection and the life"[1].

We are extremely conscious that our ministry in Africa and our service to the universal Church is placed *under the sign of the Risen Christ*. For, together with all our brother Bishops throughout the world, we are successors of the Body of Apostles that was chosen to witness to the Resurrection.

The knowledge that "with great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus"[2] truly strengthens us and uplifts us, because we know that we have received the inheritance of the Apostolic College. For us Bishops this is an hour of trust in the Risen Lord, an hour of Easter joy, an hour of great hope for the future of Africa.

2. On this occasion my thoughts go to all the Bishops of Africa, and I note with deep satisfaction that the members of the Episcopal Conference of Kenya are resolutely engaged in many programmes of collaboration and joint action with their *fellow Bishops from the AMECEA countries* of Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Malawi, the Sudan and Ethiopia. In the abundant strength that comes from charity and mutual support, your ministry is sustained and enriched. Be assured of my admiration and esteem for the unity that you express in diversity and in fraternal collaboration, and for your concerted efforts on behalf of the evangelization of those countries that have so much in common.

An initiative worthy of particular mention is AMECEA's Pastoral Institute at Eldoret. This Institute offers special opportunities to reflect on the Church's mission to guard and teach ever more effectively the word of God. The Holy Spirit himself is directing the Church in Africa to scrutinize "the signs of the times" in the light of the sacred deposit of God's word as it is proclaimed by the Magisterium. It is only on this sound basis that true answers can be found to the real problems that touch people's lives. It is in judging according to this sacred norm that the Bishops will exercise their personal responsibility to evaluate what pastoral activities and solutions are valid for Africa today.

3. Venerable Brothers, the episcopal ministry is *a ministry at the service of life, bringing the power of the Resurrection to your people*, so that they may "walk in newness of life"[3], so that they may be ever more aware of the Christian life to which they are called by virtue of their Baptism, and so that in their daily lives - in the setting of Africa - they may have fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ in the unity of the Holy Spirit. And because this fellowship is fully achieved only in heaven, your ministry likewise involves a clear proclamation of eternal life.

4. As Successor of Peter in the See of Rome and as your brother in the College of Bishops, I have come to Africa *to encourage you in your efforts as pastors of the flock*: in the efforts of each of you to offer to Christ a local Church in which unity reigns between the Bishop and the priests, the religious and the laity; in your efforts to enlighten communities with the Gospel and make them vibrant with the life of Christ; in your efforts to bring the dynamic power of the Resurrection into human life and by it to transform and elevate all levels of society.

I have come to confirm you in your total acceptance of God's holy word as it is authentically proclaimed by the Catholic Church at all times and in all places. I wish to support you in the conviction, so splendidly expressed by the Bishops of Kenya in their Pastoral Letter of 27 April 1979, that fidelity to the teachings of Christ and the Magisterium of his Church is truly in the interests of the people. By following your clear insights of faith you showed yourselves true pastors of the flock, exercising real spiritual leadership when you declared: "We, your Bishops, would do a disservice to the people if we did not expect of them the goodness and the fidelity that they are capable of by the grace of God". Your greatest contribution to your people and to all Africa is indeed the gift of God's word, the acceptance of which is the basis for all community and the condition for all progress.

5. As the *Servus Servorum Dei* I have come to uphold with you the priorities of your ministry. In the first place I offer my support for your pastoral efforts on behalf of the family - the African family. The great African tradition is faithful to so many family values, and to life itself, which takes its origin in the family. A profound respect for the family and for the good of children is a distinctive gift of Africa to the world. It is in the family that each generation learns to absorb these values and to transmit them. And the whole Church appreciates everything you do to preserve this heritage of your people, to purify it and uplift it in the sacramental fullness of Christ's new and original teaching.

Hence we see the great value of presenting the Christian family in its relationship to the Most Holy Trinity, and of maintaining the Christian ideal in its evangelical purity. It is the divine law proclaimed by Christ that gives rise to the Christian ideal of monogamous marriage, which in turn is the basis for the Christian family.

Only a week before he died, my predecessor John Paul I spoke to a group of Bishops in these words, which I consider very relevant here today in Africa: "Let us never grow tired of proclaiming the family as a community of love: conjugal love unites the couple and is procreative of new life; it mirrors the divine love, is communicated, and in the words of '*Gaudium et Spes*', is actually a sharing in the covenant of love of Christ and his Church"[4].

Be assured of my solidarity with you in this great task involving the diligent preparation of the young for marriage, the repeated proclamation of the unity and indissolubility of marriage, and the renewed invitation to the faithful to accept and foster with faith and love the Catholic celebration of the sacrament of marriage. Success in a pastoral programme of this nature requires patience and perseverance and a strong conviction that Christ has come to "make all things new"[5].

Know also that in all your efforts to build up strong united families, in which human love reflects divine love and in which the education of children is embraced with a true sense of mission, you have the support of the universal Church. With the love and sensitivity of

pastors, you have well illustrated the great principle that any pastoral approach that does not rest on the doctrinal foundation of the word of God is illusory.

Hence with true pastoral charity you have faced various problems affecting human life, and repeated the Church's teaching at the true service of man. You have clearly insisted, for example, on the most fundamental human right: the right to life from the moment of conception; you have effectively reiterated the Church's position on abortion, sterilization and contraception. Your faithful upholding of the Church's teaching contained in the Encyclical "Humanae Vitae" has been the expression of your pastoral concern and your profound attachment to the integral values of the human person.

Every effort to make society sensitive to the importance of the family is a great service to humanity.

When the full dignity of parents and children is realized and is expressed in prayer, a new power for good is unleashed throughout the Church and the world. John Paul I expressed this eloquently when he said: "The holiness of the Christian family is indeed a most apt means for producing the serene renewal of the Church which the Council so eagerly desired. Through family prayer, the *ecclesia domestica* becomes an effective reality and leads to the transformation of the world"[6].

Upon you, Brethren, rest the hope and trust of the universal Church for the defence and promotion of the African family, both parents and children. The Holy Spirit of truth, who has implanted so many values in the hearts of the African people, will never cease to assist you as pastors in bringing the teaching of Jesus ever more effectively into the lives of your brothers and sisters. We need never be afraid to preach the fullness of his message in all its evangelical purity, for, as I stated on another occasion: "Let us never fear that the challenge is too great for our people: they were redeemed by the precious blood of Christ; they are his people. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ vindicates to himself the final responsibility for the acceptance of his word and for the growth of his Church. It is he, Jesus Christ, who will continue to give the grace to his people to meet the requirements of his word, despite all difficulties, despite all weaknesses. And it is up to us to continue to proclaim the message of salvation in its entirety and purity, with patience, compassion and the conviction that what is impossible with man is possible with God"[7].

6. Another great priority of your ministry is catechesis: developing the initial faith of your people and bringing them to the fullness of Christian life. I am close to you, in praise and encouragement, in every undertaking of yours to communicate Christ, to make his Gospel incarnate in the lives and culture of your people. In union with the universal Church, and in openness to the patrimony of her long history, you are striving to lead your people in the reality of their daily lives to look to Christ for light and strength. The aim of your local Churches is to have the faithful living through, with and in Christ. Your efforts, in which you rightfully endeavour to associate the whole community - and in a special way the catechists - must have constant reference to Christ: to his divine Person, his Spirit, and his Gospel.

The "acculturation" or "inculturation" which you rightly promote will truly be a reflection of the Incarnation of the Word, when a culture, transformed and regenerated by the Gospel, brings forth from its own living tradition original expressions of Christian life, celebration and thought[8]. By respecting, preserving and fostering the particular values and riches of your

people's cultural heritage, you will be in a position to lead them to a better understanding of the mystery of Christ, which is to be lived in the noble, concrete and daily experiences of African life. There is no question of adulterating the word of God, or of emptying the Cross of its power[9], but rather of bringing Christ into the very centre of African life and of lifting up all African life to Christ. Thus not only is Christianity relevant to Africa, but Christ, in the members of his Body, is himself African.

7. Again, with good reason, you attribute great pastoral importance to *the proper formation of priests and religious, as well as to fostering these vocations in the Church*. This attitude is an expression of your deep understanding of the needs of the Body of Christ.

Since the beginning of my pontificate I have striven to point out the importance of religious consecration in the Church and the value of religious life as it affects the whole community of the faithful. Religious have the task of showing forth the holiness of the whole Body of Christ and of bearing witness to a new and eternal life acquired by the Redemption of Christ[10]. At the same time they are called to many different apostolates in the Church. Their service in the Gospel is very necessary for the life of the Church. Missionary Religious in Kenya have laboured with great fidelity in the cause of the Gospel; only the Lord Jesus can adequately thank them and reward them for what has been accomplished for the implantation of the Church. Their mission now goes on side by side with their Kenyan fellow Religious, who have heard the call of Christ and are working generously for the cause of the Gospel. The future of evangelization in this land will continue to owe much to the men and women Religious, both autochthonous and from abroad.

I have likewise sought to draw attention to the essential nature, role and function of the priesthood in its unchanging relationship to the Eucharist, which is the summit of all evangelization[11].

In particular I wish to confirm the vital importance for the Christian people of having their priests properly trained in the word of God, in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ and his Cross. In the divine plan, the transmission of the life-giving Gospel of Christ is linked with the preparation of the priests of this generation. To provide this proper seminary training is one of our greatest responsibilities as Bishops of the Church of God; it can be one of our most effective contributions to the evangelization of the world.

8. An important element that affects every community in the Church is *the unity and cooperation between Bishops and priests*. By reason of his ordination, the priest is "a co-worker with the Order of Bishop", and to live out the truth of this vocation he is called to collaborate with the Bishop and to pray for him. To explain the unity of the priests with the Bishop, Saint Ignatius of Antioch compared it to the relationship between the strings and the lute.[12]

On the part of the Bishop this relationship requires that he should be close to his priests as a brother and father and friend. As such he must love them and encourage them, not only in their pastoral activities, but in their lives of personal consecration. The Bishop is called to strengthen his priests in faith and to urge them to look constantly to Christ the Good Shepherd, in order that they may realize ever more their priestly identity and dignity.

The Church renews her debt of gratitude to all the missionary and "*Fidei Donum*" priests who are labouring in the cause of Christ's Gospel. Their generosity is an expression of the power of Christ's grace, and their ministry is a great proof of Catholic unity.

9. In the building up of the Church I am aware of your sustained work *to build small Christian communities* in which the word of God is the guideline of action and in which the Eucharist is the true centre of life. The whole community of the faithful benefits from these initiatives that make it possible for people to recognize the Church in her concrete expression and human dimension as a visible sacrament of God's universal love and saving grace. It is certainly the will of Jesus Christ that the love of Christians should be manifested in such a way that individual communities exemplify the universal norm: "By this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another"[13]. In your pastoral zeal you know the wise criteria laid down by Paul VI and which remain a sure guide for the effectiveness of these communities[14]. At this time I would just stress the great power which those communities have to fulfil an active ecclesial role in the evangelization of Africa.

May they go forward with you, their pastors, and with the priests, to communicate "the unsearchable riches of Christ"[15].

10. Before concluding my words to you today, my dear Brethren in Christ Jesus, I wish to emphasize once more the great need for holiness in our lives. To exercise fruitfully our role as pastors of God's people, we must know Christ and love him. In a word, we are called to friendship with the Lord, just as the Apostles were. Like Jesus we are the object of the Father's love and the Holy Spirit is alive in our hearts. The *effectiveness of everything we do depends on our union with Jesus*, on our holiness of life. There is no other way to be a worthy Bishop, a good Shepherd of the flock. There is no pastoral leadership without prayer, for only in prayer is union with Jesus maintained. Only by being like Jesus, Son of Mary, who is the Mother of us all, can we fulfil our mission to the Church.

May Mary Queen of Apostles sustain you in holiness and love, in prayer and pastoral charity, and help you to bring Jesus to all your people, to all Kenya, to all Africa.

Praised be Jesus Christ, "the chief Shepherd"[16] of God's people, "the Bishop and Shepherd of our souls"[17].

[1] *Jn* 11:25.

[2] *Acts* 4:33.

[3] *Rom* 6:4.

[4] AAS 71 (1979), p. 766.

[5] *Rev* 21:5.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 777.

[7] AAS 71 (1979), p. 1424.

[8] Cf. *Catechesi Tradendae*, 53.

[9] Cf. *1 ir* 1:17.

[10] Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 44.

[11] Cf. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 5.

[12] Letter to the Ephesians, IV.

[13] *Jn* 13:35.

[14] Cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 58.

[15] *Eph* 3:8.

[16] *1 Pt* 5:4.

[17] *1 Pt* 2:25.

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II AT THE DEPARTURE FROM KENYA

Nairobi
Thursday, 8 May 1980

Dear Friends,

1. After two unforgettable days, I wish to express my profound gratitude for the truly African hospitality which I have received here. The kindness, the openness and the joy of the people of Kenya have impressed me deeply. Now I know what it means to be swept up by the enthusiastic reception of an African community. More than ever, I now feel that I belong to you.

My mission now takes me to other African countries. Thank you for the strength and the joy you have given me. Thank you for having made me so much a part of your hopes and achievements, for having shared with me your determination to go on building a nation, united in its pursuit of just progress for all, faithful to its culture and traditions, strong in its belief that joint efforts will succeed.

I keep in my heart and I shall cherish for ever all the moments of this wonderful visit, all the people I have met; I shall remember your music and your songs. In the prayers we shared, I have felt deep communion with you, a communion that neither distance nor time can diminish.

2. My gratitude goes to His Excellency the President of Kenya, to all the authorities of the nation and of the city of Nairobi, to those responsible for public order during these days. I feel indebted to all the people who have contributed their time, their work and their services to create the conditions that have made this visit such a rewarding experience. A very special word of thanks to the management and staff of the Voice of Kenya and the local press, as well as to the foreign media, which made it possible for me to enter, with my friendship and message, the homes and villages of many who could not be here. How much I would have liked to travel across your land and to meet each one of you, to greet and bless you, and to learn firsthand about your lives and struggles. I hope that the words and the pictures which the media have brought to you were able to convey my esteem, my encouragement and my deep love for every human being in this beautiful land.

3. How can I adequately express my gratitude to my brother Bishops for the moments of grace which we shared in our meetings and liturgical celebration? Moments of grace, yes, moments of divine grace; for I have seen that you have accepted the message of Christ. Your churches in the cities and villages, your schools and hospitals, the ministry of your priests, the dedication of your men and women religious, the sacramental life of your faithful, the many activities by which the laity assume their share of the mission of evangelization - all of this bears witness to the grace of God which is at work in your midst. At this moment of departure, I wish therefore to thank God with you for the dynamic Church in Kenya.

4. One last thought I wish to leave with you. A nation that holds God in honour cannot fail to receive the blessings of God. Even when you meet problems, even when new difficulties arise, your trust in God will be the guarantee that you will overcome all obstacles, and that you will build a nation where unity and love reign, where brotherhood and peace flourish, where everyone works together for the future in the spirit of *Harambee*. The Creator has given every human being a dignity that is unsurpassed and that is equal for all. Your common efforts in the further development of your nation will succeed when they are inspired by respect for the fundamental God-given dignity and rights of every man, woman and child, and by the desire to create the necessary conditions so that families and all people may enjoy the dignity that is theirs as children of God.

Assuring you once again of my fraternal affection and esteem, I now take leave of Kenya.

To all of you, to all the people of Kenya, I wish to say once more: thank you all! *Asanteni sana!*

Till we meet again! *Kwa herini, kwa herini ya kuonana!*

May God bless you! *Mungu awabariki!*

May God bless all Kenya!

***ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
AT THE ARRIVAL IN GHANA***

*Accra
Thursday, 8 May 1980*

Mr President,

1. Your kind welcome on my arrival in Ghana gives me much pleasure, and I am grateful for the expression of esteem which you have directed to my person in your own name and on behalf of all the people of this country. On my part I assure you and all your fellow-citizens of my respect and friendship.

It is indeed a great joy to be in Ghana. Yours is a country blessed in so many ways. The rich variety of nature - low coastlands and high plains, forests and savannahs - marks the home of a people rich in linguistic and cultural expressions. At the same time they are united in a common resolve to be a nation where every man, woman and child, where every family and group feel respected in their dignity and in their desire to develop their potential to the full. My affectionate greeting goes to all the people of Ghana, wherever they may be. I greet them in the cities and the villages. I greet the authorities and the elders, the fathers and the mothers, and in a special way the young people and the children. To all I say, I have come as your friend. I have come to be with the poor, to comfort the sick, to speak a word of encouragement and hope to those who are lonely, abandoned or in pain.

2. At the moment of my arrival, I wish also to express my special joy at the opportunity to meet the beloved sons and daughters of the Catholic church in Ghana. My warm greeting and blessing goes in the first place to my Brothers in the Episcopate, the zealous and faithful Pastors of the People of God. To all the clergy, Ghanaian and from abroad, to the men and women religious, and to all the laity, I say: may the joy and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you on this day and always. I have come to you as Bishop of Rome and Successor of Peter, as a father and brother to rejoice with you in our common faith, hope and charity, and to celebrate with you the communion that unites us.

3. I gladly avail myself of this opportunity to express to you, Mr President, and to all the civil authorities, my deep appreciation for the esteem and understanding which you manifest towards the Catholic Church, and which you translate into an effective collaboration in the field of education, health care and the many sectors of human advancement. The Church will always be grateful for the freedom to carry out her mission, which is religious in nature. And because she is the servant of mankind, the Church will always be ready to cooperate in promoting justice, peace and human dignity through the active participation of her members in common efforts, and through her continuous proclamation that all human beings are created in the image and likeness of God and therefore endowed with equal dignity and rights.

At the beginning of my visit of friendships and of peace in Ghana, I invoke upon this land and its people abundant blessings from Almighty God.

***MEETING OF JOHN PAUL II
WITH THE PRESIDENT OF GHANA***

*Accra
Thursday, 8 May 1980*

Mr President,

1. I express my sincere thanks for the words which you have addressed to me on this occasion of our meeting here in the capital City of Accra. I feel deeply honoured by the sentiments of esteem which you have manifested towards my person. I accept them gratefully, for I know that they are meant to honour not my person but the Head of the Catholic Church coming to the beloved nation of Ghana as a pilgrim of peace. I wish to renew once more my appreciation for the invitation which you so kindly extended to me - as did also my brother Bishops - to visit your country and your people.

As I had the occasion to say when I officially announced my visit to Africa, the purpose of this journey is *to perform my universal ministry* and to honour personally the Church in Africa. With regard to Ghana I also noted that this is the year in which the Catholic Church celebrates the centenary of her implantation in this part of the great African continent. It was therefore important for me to express in a special way the joy of the whole Church on this happy occasion. I also hope that my visit will contribute to the promotion of authentic human progress in Ghana and in all Africa, at the service of universal brotherhood and peace. Since my arrival this morning, I have already received many kindnesses from the people of the capital City; I wish to take this opportunity to express, through your person, my joyful gratitude to everyone.

2. By my presence here today, Mr President, I desire *to honour the whole Ghanaian Nation*, with the wealth of its history, people, culture and achievements - in a word, with its own authentically African and Ghanaian heritage and genius, and in its own rightful place among the nations of this continent and of the world. The history of my own native country, a history made up of moments of great achievement and joy but also of periods of suffering and sadness, has made me acutely aware of how necessary it is to respect the specific values of each people and of each nation: its traditions, its aspirations and its rights among all the member nations of the world community. Africa - and each of the nations that form part of it - has so much to offer to the common endeavours of all peace-loving people.

Too often relations between States and Governments, especially when viewed in the context of political and economic development, are seen in terms of mere self-interest, of strengthening already dominant positions, and of pressure applied through aid, with the result that older and economically more advanced nations fail to see that the young countries have much more to offer than simply a share of their natural resources or being a market for the products of the industrialized nations.

3. So many of the values that are embodied in the culture of the African nations not only contribute to the building of each nation, but can add to the enrichment of other nations and peoples as well.

For Africa has *something distinctive to offer to the world*. One of the original aspects of this continent is its diversity, but a diversity that is bound together by the undeniable unity of its culture: a vision of the world where the sacred is central; a deep awareness of the link between Creator and nature; a great respect for all life; a sense of family and of community that blossoms into an open and joyful hospitality; reverence for dialogue as a means of settling differences and sharing insights; spontaneity and the joy of living expressed in poetic language, song and dance. All these aspects manifest a culture with an all encompassing

spiritual dimension. This is what makes the African culture unique. This is what binds the many people of Africa together without hampering in the least that immense richness of local expressions or the heritage of single groups and regions.

By my own origin, education and history, I have learned to value highly the power that culture has for every people. During my visit to my native Poland, I stated this conviction as follows: "Culture is an expression of man, a confirmation of humanity. Man creates culture and through culture creates himself. He creates himself with the inward effort of the spirit, of thought, will and heart. At the same time he creates culture in communion with others. Culture is an expression of communication, of shared thought and collaboration by human beings. It is born of service of the common good and becomes an essential good of human communities"[1]. I therefore say to Ghana and all Africa: Preserve your culture. Let it become enriched through exchange with other cultures, but do not let your own culture die. Keep it alive, and offer it as your contribution to the world community.

Each nation brings to the family of nations its own cultural contribution, and through the legitimate expression of values and traditions there is possible a harmony among peoples that transcends partisan differences, prejudices and rivalries. Such a harmony, built on respect for and openness towards the values of others, in particular their moral and spiritual values, facilitates the possibility of concerted action on problems that extend beyond the borders of individual nations. Africa is called to bring fresh ideals and insights to a world that shows signs of fatigue and selfishness. I am convinced that you Africans can do this.

4. In stressing respect for moral and spiritual values in the sphere of international collaboration, I have touched on what I consider to be basic in all relationships in society. All structures that are created as expressions of needs and aspirations relate to the human person, for they are meant to serve each human person and the whole human community. This holds true especially of *political structures and activities*.

In my address to the General Assembly of the United Nations last October, I said that all political activity "... comes from man, is exercised by man and is for man. And if political activity is cut off from this fundamental relationship and finality, if it becomes in a way its own end, it loses much of its reason to exist. Even more, it can also give rise to a specific alienation; it can become extraneous to man; it can come to contradict humanity itself. In reality, what justifies the existence of any political activity is service to man, concerned and responsible attention to the essential problems and duties of his earthly existence in its social dimension and significance, on which also the good of each person depends".

If I have stressed this point once more, Mr President, I have done so out of deep conviction, and because such is the teaching of the church which God has called me to lead, namely that no effort to achieve human advancement can succeed if the lofty dignity of every human being is not respected, defended and promoted in every situation. Such must be the motivation not only of the authorities but also of every single citizen, of all the men and women of this beautiful land who are called to work together so that every one may be given the possibility to live a life in keeping with human dignity.

5. Yes, Mr President, Ghana is a beautiful country, rich in cultural traditions and in the potential of its people, endowed also with natural resources, especially in the agricultural domain. It is my hope that, under the guidance of the authorities, all the citizens will *loyally*

work together, without having to give up any of their own cultural values, but also without letting barriers arise between individuals and groups; that they will wholeheartedly and industriously work together to make the earth yield bountiful fruit. You have your cities, with ever larger concentrations of people, where problems of housing, education and employment may arise and demand bold action to ensure that nobody is excluded from the benefits of progress.

But there are also the rural areas, where most of the people still live, and where there exists a real potential for contributing to the national effort for development. Since justice demands that nobody should go hungry or lack the opportunity to achieve his or her full potential, both spiritually and materially, then society should also regard agricultural labour as ennobling, and the status and dignity of the rural population should be constantly improved.

6. I can assure you, Mr President, that the Catholic Church stands always ready to offer her specific contribution, through the collaboration of her leaders and all her members. The Church has no political or economic designs or projects. The most efficient longterm contribution that she can make to the development of a nation is in raising *the moral and ethical awareness of people with regard to the demands of justice, social love and fraternal collaboration*; and in stressing the development of the whole person, to ensure that this development is not understood in the materialistic sense; in making each person aware of his or her dignity as given by God.

It is also well known that, right from the beginning, the Church in Africa has encouraged and participated in concrete efforts in education, health care, literacy and many other fields. She is prepared to continue this collaboration and this commitment in accordance with her own mission and nature, while fully respecting the lawful role and authority of the State.

Mr President, the dynamism and the virtues of its people can ensure a great future for Africa. That Ghana may fulfil her role of destiny in this continent is my fervent wish and prayer today.

[1] Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Allocutio ex externo archiepiscopatum aedium podio ad iuvenes habita in urbe "Gniezno"*, 2 die 3 iun. 1979: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, II (1979) 1408.

HOMILY OF JOHN PAUL II

Accra (Ghana), 8 May 1980

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

1. A little less than ten years ago, the first Pan African and Malagasy Meeting of the Laity was held here in Accra. As Archbishop of Krakow and also consultant to the Council for the Laity I had the opportunity at that time, although I was not present, to follow with particular attention, interest and admiration the highlights of that historic event. The lay men and women who had come from thirty-six African countries were, in effect, saying in unison: "Present!". They were telling the world: "We are present in the communion of the faithful; we are present in the mission of the Church of Christ in Africa!".

2. Ten years later, God has granted me the opportunity to come to Accra, to be with you today, to celebrate the Eucharist together with you, to speak to you, and through you to address a message to all the Catholic laity of Africa. Today it is the Successor of Peter, it is Pope John Paul II who says: "Present!". Yes, I am present with the laity of Africa; I come as your father and as Pastor of the universal Church. I am present as your brother in the faith! As a brother in Christ I wish to tell you how close I am to you in the infinite charity of the Crucified and Risen Lord, how much I love you, how much I love the laity of Africa!

As your Pastor, I wish to confirm you in your efforts to remain faithful to the Gospel, and in your mission to carry to others the Good News of our salvation. I wish to exhort you, the laity, to renew through the Eucharist the strength of your Christian commitment, to revive the joy of being members of the Body of Christ, to dedicate yourselves once again as Christians in Africa to promote the true and integral development of this great continent. Together with you I wish to give thanks to the heavenly Father, remembering "how you have shown your faith in action, worked for love and persevered through hope, in your Lord Jesus Christ" .

3. Brothers and sisters in Christ, I desire to direct my words, my greeting and my blessing to the Catholic laity in every country of Africa. I went to reach beyond the boundaries of language, geography and ethnic origin, and, without distinction, to entrust each one to Christ the Lord. Thus I ask everyone of you who hears my message of fraternal solidarity and pastoral instruction to pass it on. I ask you to make my message travel from village to village, from home to home. Tell your brothers and sisters in the faith that the Pope loves you all and embraces you in the peace of Christ.

4. This vast continent of Africa has been endowed by the Creator with many natural resources. In our own day we have witnessed how the development and use of these numerous resources have greatly served to advance the material and social progress of your individual countries. As we thank God for the benefits of this progress, we must not forget, we dare not forget, that the greatest resource and the greatest treasure entrusted to you or to anyone is the gift of faith, the tremendous privilege of knowing Christ Jesus as Lord.

You who are laypersons in the Church, and who possess faith, the greatest of all resources - you have a unique opportunity and crucial responsibility. Through your lives in the midst of your daily activities in the world, you show the power that faith has to transform the world and to renew the family of man. Even though it is hidden and unnoticed like the leaven or the salt of the earth spoken of in the Gospel, your role as laity is indispensable for the Church in the fulfilment of her mission from Christ. This was clearly taught by the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council when they stated: "The Church is not truly established and does not fully live, nor is she a perfect sign of Christ among people, unless there exists a laity worthy of the name, working alongside the hierarchy. For the Gospel cannot be deeply imprinted on the mentality, life and work of any people without the active presence of lay people" .

5. The role of lay people in the mission of the Church extends in two directions: in union with your pastors and assisted by their guidance you build up the communion of the faithful; secondly, as responsible citizens you permeate with the leaven of the Gospel the society in which you live, in its economic, social, political, cultural and intellectual dimensions. When you faithfully carry out these two roles as citizens of both the earthly city and the heavenly Kingdom, then are the words of Christ fulfilled: "You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world" .

6. Today our brothers and sisters receive new life through water and the Holy Spirit . By Baptism they are incorporated into the Church and reborn as children of God. They receive the greatest dignity possible for any person. As Saint Peter said, they become "a chosen race, a royal

priesthood, a consecrated nation, a people set apart to sing the praises of God" . In the sacrament of Confirmation they are more intimately joined to the Church and endowed by the Holy Spirit with special strength . By means of these two great sacraments Christ summons his people, Christ summons each one of the laity to assume a share in the responsibility for building up the communion of the faithful.

As members of the laity, you are called to take an active part in the sacramental and liturgical life of the Church, especially in the Eucharistic sacrifice. At the same time you are called to spread the Gospel actively through the practice of charity and through involvement in catechetical and missionary efforts, according to the gifts which each one of you has received . In every Christian community, whether it be the "domestic Church" constituted by 'the family, or the parish collaborating with the priest, or the diocese united around the Bishop, the laity strive, like the followers of Christ in the first century, to remain faithful to the teaching of the Apostles, faithful to fraternal service, faithful to prayer and to the celebration of the Eucharist .

7. Your Christian vocation does not take you away from any of your other brothers and sisters. It does not inhibit your involvement in civic affairs nor exempt you from your responsibilities as a citizen. It does not divide you from society nor relieve you of the daily trials of life. Rather your continued engagement in secular activities and professions is truly a part of your vocation. For you are called to make the Church present and fruitful in the ordinary circumstances of life - in married and family life, in the daily conditions of earning a living, in political and civic responsibilities and in cultural, scientific and educational pursuits. No human activity is foreign to the Gospel. God wishes all of creation to be ordered to his Kingdom, and it is especially to the laity that the Lord has entrusted this task.

8. The laity of the Church in Africa have a crucial role to play in meeting the urgent problems and challenges which face this vast continent. As Christian laity, the Church expects you to help shape the future of your individual countries, to contribute to their development in some particular sphere. The Church asks you to bring the influence of the Gospel and the presence of Christ into every human activity, and to seek to build a society where the dignity of each person is respected and where equality, justice and freedom are protected and promoted.

9. Today, I also wish to emphasize the need for the continuing instruction and catechesis of the laity. For only a serious spiritual and doctrinal formation in your Christian identity, together with an adequate civic and human preparation in secular activities, can make possible that contribution of the laity to the future of Africa which is so greatly desired. In this regard we are reminded of the exhortation of Saint Paul: "... we urge you and appeal to you in the Lord Jesus to make more and more progress in the kind of life you are meant to live: the life that God wants..." . In order to accomplish this goal, greater knowledge is needed of the mystery of Christ. It is necessary for the laity to enter into this mystery of Christ and to be trained especially in the word of God, which leads to salvation. The Holy Spirit is calling upon the Church to pursue this path with loving tenacity and perseverance. Hence I wish to encourage the worthy initiatives on all levels which have already been undertaken in this field. May these efforts continue and increasingly equip the laity for their mission, so that with holiness of life they may meet the many needs that lie ahead, so that the whole Church in Africa will ever more effectively communicate Christ.

10. My brothers and sisters, we were reminded today by the second reading that Jesus Christ "is the living stone..." . Jesus Christ is the one on whom the future of the world is built, on whom the future of every man and woman depends. At all times we must look to him. At all times we must build on him. Thus I repeat to you what I said to the world on Easter Sunday of this year: "Do not reject him, you who, in whatever way and in whatever sphere, are building the world of today and of tomorrow: the world of culture and civilization, the world of economics and of politics, the world of science and information. You who are building the world of peace... Do not refuse Christ: he is the cornerstone!".

11. With the words of the Apostle Peter, I invite you to "set yourselves close to him so that you too... may be living stones making a spiritual house" , building up the Church in Africa, advancing the Kingdom of God on earth.

It is in this spirit that we pray to our heavenly Father: "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven". Amen.

Chers frères et Sœurs du Togo et du Bénin,

Merci d'être venus si nombreux, d'avoir marché longuement pour rencontrer le Vicaire du Christ. Je vous invite vous aussi à demeurer fermes dans la foi, et très unis entre vous. Le Seigneur est fidèle; il ne vous abandonnera pas si vous lui donnez votre confiance. Et il vous rendra forts pour que vous témoigniez de votre foi, non seulement à l'église, mais dans les actes de votre vie quotidienne, où il faut sans cesse choisir de vivre selon la vérité, selon la pureté, selon la charité de l'Evangile. Continuez à vous instruire des vérités de la foi. Et approchez-vous avec joie des sacrements de pénitence et de l'Eucharistie, en pensant que c'est le Seigneur qui vous pardonne, qui vous nourrit, qui vous donne sa grâce. C'est le signe

visible de sa présence invisible. Comme disait Jésus ressuscité: "Paix à vous". "Ne craignez pas". Que le Seigneur vous bénisse.

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE CHURCH OF GHANA

*Cathedral of Accra
Thursday, 8 May 1980*

*Venerable and dear Brothers in the Episcopate,
Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,*

1. After his Ascension into heaven, our Lord Jesus Christ sent the Holy Spirit upon his Apostles and into his Church. The Holy Spirit was Jesus' first gift to those who believe. Jesus himself had foretold the coming of the Spirit of Truth when he said: "... he will bear witness to me and you also are witnesses"[1].

And today in Accra, in this Cathedral dedicated to the Holy Spirit, we have assembled to celebrate this mystery, this great reality of the Holy Spirit's presence in the Church - *the presence of the Holy Spirit who continues to bear witness to Jesus* and who stirs up new witnesses among the faithful in every generation. We rejoice to know that the Holy Spirit is with us still, that he unites the Church in her communion and in her ministry[2]. We rejoice that through the power of the Holy Spirit the great life-giving message of the death and Resurrection of Jesus has been passed on down the centuries, and that it has been brought to Ghana.

2. After the efforts at evangelization that had been made in previous centuries, two generous priests, Father Moreau and Father Murat, succeeded a hundred years ago in establishing the Catholic Church in this land. We praise the grace of God that brought them to the people of Ghana on that Pentecost Tuesday in 1880. *And we bless the memory of all the missionaries* who came subsequently, in order to bear witness to Christ through the power of his Holy Spirit. *The seed of God's word planted on Ghanaian soil has taken root*; it has grown into a large tree and has brought forth fruits of holiness for the glory of the Most Holy Trinity.

In spite of difficulties and the vicissitudes of history, the Gospel has been freely offered and freely accepted. The Kingdom of God has been preached, and over and over again evangelization has reached its dynamic summit in the "clear proclamation that in Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, who died and rose from the dead, salvation is offered to all men, as a gift of God's grace and mercy"[3].

The genuine charity of Christ was the motivation for one missionary Congregation after another in sending its members to serve Ghana and her people, and the same genuine charity of Christ was the authentic means that bore such effective witness to the Gospel. Priests, Sisters and Brothers came on a mission of salvation and service. Each fulfilled his or her role. All of them together, through the power of the Holy Spirit, built up the Church by word and deed, by prayer and sacrifice. At a later date lay mission helpers came too, bearing witness to the universal missionary nature of the Church.

And all of these labourers for the Gospel have served valiantly - and with God's help they will continue to work generously, side-by-side with their Ghanaian brothers and sisters, in the harvest of the Church.

3. But the same Holy Spirit who sustained dedicated missionaries also raised up *new followers for Christ*, vivifying the local Church and calling its members in turn to share the great task of evangelization. In the strength of the Paschal Mystery, people accepted the word of God; they believed and were baptized; they were nurtured on the Eucharist and came to maturity in Christian living. Entire Christian communities accepted the challenge to "walk in newness of life"[4] and to embrace the challenge of the Beatitudes in their fullness. The missionary contact that had begun with human affability and kindness led finally to the full flowering of parishes, which became "the prime mover and pre-eminent place for catechesis" and "a major point of reference for the Christian people"[5].

From the midst of these parishes and other Christian communities there came forth those generous young people who would heed God's call to the priesthood and religious life and thus, together with the laity, fulfil their distinctive role in the one Church of God, as "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people"[6].

In due time, *Ghanaian Bishops were appointed to the pastoral leadership of the People of God*.

With gratitude for what had already been achieved in the work of evangelization, they entered into the continuity of apostolic succession. The fact that all the Bishops of this country are now native Ghanaians is an eloquent testimony to the success of the work of the missionaries and to the solid implantation of the Church in this land. For this we give special thanks to God on the occasion of the celebration of this centenary.

4. *The one Body of Christ was likewise to perceive its common task, its essential mission, its deepest identity*, which was later so accurately expressed by Paul VI in this way: "Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church"[7]. Above all, the spread of the Gospel was to be linked with the witness of love, in accordance with Christ's words: "This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you"[8]. In the observance of this commandment all Christian societies find their secure basis. And the love to which all Christians are called is itself the ladder by which every generation ascends to God and to eternal life.

5. You, *my brother priests*, at the service of your brothers and sisters of the laity - all of whom are called to holiness of life, all of whom are witnesses for the Kingdom of God - you have the particular mission of proclaiming the Gospel in its fullest enactment, which is the celebration of the Eucharist, wherein the work of redemption is renewed. In a special way you participate in the mission of Jesus for the benefit of the whole Body of Christ; you share deeply in the burning desire of his soul: "I must proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom... for I was sent for this purpose"[9]. It is because of this that you have offered your lives in celibacy and pastoral charity, to stay close to your people, to lead them in the path of salvation, building up the Church in faith and love, and in the unity and peace of Christ.

And you, *men and women Religious of Ghana*, you are called to the service of your brothers and sisters through a multiplicity of activities motivated by love. But your greatest

contribution is not what you do, but what you are. By your consecration to the Lord Jesus himself you show that the Gospel is the full expression of all human values and that the love of Jesus Christ has first place in the pilgrim Church. Yes, your consecration is a normal expression of the full and healthy life of the Church. The maturity of ecclesial life in Ghana requires the oblation of your lives - made with generosity and lived out in persevering charity and joy. In your self-sacrifice for the sake of the Kingdom of God you become ever more intimately united with all your people, sharing the hopes of their everyday lives and helping them to fulfil their deepest aspirations for eternal life.

And to you *the seminarians* I say this: Remember that you are called to be close to Christ. You are meant to be his friends, his companions, his collaborators in the mystery of salvation. To accomplish this you must pray, for only in prayer will you come to know Jesus, to love Jesus and to understand fully the needs of his people. There are many aspects to your seminary training. The good of God's people requires that you should be intellectually prepared in ecclesiastical and secular sciences, that you should understand deeply your own culture, so that you will be able to bring the word of God to it effectively. But all your studies and activities must be preceded and followed by prayer. Only through prayer will you be sustained in the love of Christ, only through prayer will your lives be relevant. When the Pope goes back to Rome, remember that he told you this: "Let us not lose sight of Jesus, who leads us in our faith and brings it to perfection"[10].

Viewing the Church in Ghana, I cannot but say a special word about the *family*. Since it is the community in which every person is born, the family is therefore the foundation on which all wider communities are built. Let every family truly be a "domestic church", a community where the Lord Jesus has the central place, where children learn to know and love God, where prayer is the binding force. In this community of love and life, the future of society is decided, and the peace of the world is built.

6. And together with your Bishops and with the Church throughout the world, you *the faithful of Ghana* - all the clergy, religious, seminarians and laity - are called to holiness of life, to bear witness to Christ, and to spread the Good News of salvation. *To all of you belongs a share in the evangelization of the world.* It is the work of the Holy Spirit; it is he who gives witness to Jesus in this our age and confirms all his members as witnesses to the Lord Jesus and to his Gospel of love. All of you in this centenary year of grace are summoned to hear Christ's words: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven"[11].

Beloved brothers and sisters: *this is why I have come to Ghana: to bear witness to Christ*, who was crucified and who rose from the dead, and *to tell you all that we share a common mission in bringing Jesus to the world.*

In our task of bearing witness to her Son, Mary the Mother of Jesus will assist us. She is the Mother of the entire Body just as she is the Mother of the Head. She is the Help of Christians; she is the cause of our joy.

And to her Son Jesus Christ and to his Eternal Father be all praise and glory in the unity of the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

Je n'oublie pas non plus les chrétiens du Togo et les chrétiens du Bénin qui ont tenu à venir jusqu'ici, avec leurs pasteurs, pour voir le Pape, écouter sa parole, prier avec lui et lui donner le témoignage de leur attachement. Je regrette de n'avoir pu visiter vos pays et vos Eglises cette fois-ci. Je demande à Dieu de vous bénir, de bénir vos familles, surtout ceux qui sont dans l'épreuve. Et dites-bien à vos compatriotes que le Pape pense aussi à vos Eglises, qu'il prie pour elles, en soutenant le ministère de vos évêques qui sont mes frères. A chacun de vous, mon affection et mes encouragements.

[1] *Io.* 15, 26-27.

[2] Cfr. *Lumen Gentium*, 4.

[3] Pauli VI *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 27.

[4] *Rom.* 6, 4.

[5] Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Catechesi Tradendae*, 67.

[6] *I Petr.* 1, 9.

[7] Pauli VI *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 14.

[8] *Io.* 15, 12.

[9] *Luc.* 4, 43.

[10] *Hebr.* 12, 2.

[11] *Matth.* 5, 16.

**PRAYER OF JOHN PAUL II
AT THE END OF THE MASS CELEBRATED IN ACCRA**

*Independence Square
Thursday, 8 May 1980*

On this day of joy as we gather in your presence. O Mary, Mother of Jesus and Mother of his Church, we are mindful of the role you played in the evangelisation of this land. We are mindful of how - *in the beginning - the missionaries* came with the power of Christ's Gospel and *committed the success of their work to you*.

As Mother of Divine Grace you were with the missionaries in all their efforts, and you were with Mother Church of whom you are the type, the model and the supreme expression - in bringing Christ into Africa.

And as the Mother of the Church you presided over all the activities of evangelisation and over the implantation of the Gospel in the hearts of the faithful. You sustained the missionaries in hope and you gave joy to every new community that was born of the Church's evangelising activity.

You were there, with your intercession and your prayers, as the first grace of Baptism developed, and as those who had new life in Christ your Son came to a full appreciation of their sacramental life and Christian calling.

And you are here today as the Christian family gathers to celebrate the Gospel, to recall the mighty works of God, and to commit itself to the continued evangelisation of this land and continent "so that the word of the Lord may speed on and triumph"[1].

We ask you, Mary, to help us to fulfil this mission which your Son has given to his Church and which, in this generation, falls to us. Mindful of your role as Help of Christians, we entrust ourselves to you in the work of carrying the Gospel ever deeper into the hearts and lives of all the people.

We entrust to you our missionary mandate and commit our cause totally to your prayers.

And, as Pastor of the universal Church, Vicar of your Son, *I, John Paul II, through you, O Mary, entrust the whole Church in Ghana and in all Africa to Christ our Lord.* Through you I present to Christ the Saviour the destiny of Africa, praying that his love and justice will touch the hearts of every man, woman and child of this continent.

Mary, I entrust all this to Christ through you, and I entrust all this to you for Christ your Son. I do it at a moment when I am closely united with my brother Bishops in celebrating the Gospel as "the power of salvation to all who believe"[2]. I do it now, at this special moment when my brothers are so close to me in the exercise of our common responsibility for the Church in Africa. Accept, O Mary, this offering from all of us, and from all God's people, and present it to your Son. Present him a Church "holy and without blemish"[3].

Be mindful, O Mother, of all who make up the Church in Africa. Assist the Bishops and their priests to be ever faithful to the word of God. Help sanctify the religious and the seminarians.

Intercede so that the love of your Son will penetrate into all families, so that it will console all those in pain and suffering, all those in need and want. Look kindly upon the catechists and all who fulfil a special role of evangelisation and Catholic education for the glory of your Son. Accept this our loving consecration and confirm us in the Gospel of your Son.

As we express *our deepest gratitude* to you for a century of your maternal care, we are strong in the conviction that the Holy Spirit is still overshadowing you, *so that in Africa you may bring forth Christ in every generation.*

To Jesus Christ your Son, with the Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit be praise and thanksgiving for ever and ever. Amen.

[1] *2 Thess* 3:1.

[2] *Rom* 1:16.

[3] *Eph* 5:27.

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE REPRESENTATIVES OF
OTHER CHRISTIAN CHURCHES**

*Accra (Ghana)
Thursday, 8 May 1980*

Dear friends in our Lord Jesus Christ,

1. I am deeply honoured by your presence here today. It is a pleasure for me to meet distinguished representatives of my Christian brethren of Ghana. I wish to greet you all in the charity of Jesus Christ. It means so much to me to have this opportunity to tell you of my intention, and the intention of the whole Catholic Church, to pray and to work sincerely and perseveringly for the restoration of unity in faith and love among all Christians.

The commitment of the Second Vatican Council, of my predecessors and of my own pontificate is based on the desire which Christ expressed at the Last Supper in his prayer to his Father for his disciples: "... that they may all be one"[1].

2. All of us realize the great value that prayer has in accomplishing what is humanly difficult or even impossible. Jesus himself has told us: "What is impossible with men is possible with God"[2]. We know how important it is to turn humbly to God, day after day, asking him for the gift of constant conversion of life, which is so closely linked to the question of Christian unity. An occasion such as this inspires in our hearts an ever greater desire for this unity and for the means that dispose us to receive it as God's free gift. Hence this meeting inspires us to pray together) to lift up our hearts in unison to "the Father of mercies and God of all comfort"[3] .

3. At the same time as we pursue our efforts towards the goal of perfect unity, we give thanks for the great bonds that already unite us in faith in the divinity of Christ. We praise God for our common faith in Baptism as an incorporation into the death and Resurrection of the Lord. We praise him for the common love and esteem that we have for the Holy Scriptures, which speak to us of Christ and his Church. And by the grace of God we are already in a position to confess together that "Jesus Christ is the Son of God"[4]and that "there is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"[5].

4. Because we believe in Christ and in "the unsearchable riches of Christ"[6], we feel led by the Spirit to do everything possible to remove the divisions in faith that impair our perfect common witness to the Lord and his Kingdom, so that we may better serve our neighbour and more effectively bring the Good News of salvation to the world that continues to see in us a divided Christ. And yet we know that Christ has prayed for unity, and that the Father listens to his prayer. Christ's prayer is the reason for our hope and we know that "hope does not disappoint us"[7]. It gives me great pleasure to be informed of the worthy ecumenical activities taking place in Africa. I pray that the relationship between individual Christians and

the relationship between Churches and ecclesial communities will make ever greater progress in truth and love for the glory of the Most Holy Trinity.

[1] *Io.* 17, 21.

[2] *Luc.* 18, 24.

[3] *2 Cor.* 1, 3.

[4] *1 Io.* 4, 15.

[5] *1 Tim.* 2, 5.

[6] *Eph.* 3, 8.

[7] *Rom.* 5, 5.

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE MUSLIM LEADERS

*Accra (Ghana)
Thursday, 8 May 1980*

Dear friends,

At this time I wish to express my respect for the Muslim representatives present here. Through you I send my cordial greetings to the entire Muslim community throughout Ghana.

During my recent visit to Turkey I had the occasion to speak special words of friendship for my Islamic brothers and sisters. My words were the expression of a contact that was fostered by the Second Vatican Council, and that found an important reference in the memorable Message to Africa of Paul VI in 1967. On that occasion he stated: "We also wish to express our esteem for all the followers of Islam living in Africa, who have principles in common with Christianity, which give us glad hope of an effective dialogue. Meanwhile, we express our wish that Muslims and Christians live as neighbours mutual respect will be constantly present in social life also, and common action to promote the acceptance and the defence of man's fundamental rights"[1].

Yes, mutual respect based on mutual understanding and directed to the joint service of humanity is a great contribution to the world.

Hence today I renew my own sentiments of esteem and those of the whole Catholic Church for the Muslims of Ghana and of all Africa, praying that the Almighty and Merciful God will grant peace and brotherhood to all the members of the human family. And may the harmony

of creation and the great cause of human dignity be advanced through our fraternal solidarity and friendship.

[1] Pauli VI *Africa Terrarum*, 5, die 29 oct. 1967: *Insegnamenti di Paolo VI*, V (1967) 579.

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS

*Accra (Ghana)
Friday, 9 May 1980*

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Meeting the Heads of Mission and the Diplomatic Corps in this capital City of Accra gives me great pleasure. I feel honoured by the courtesy which you extend to me by your presence here, and I wish to thank His Excellency the Dean and the Diplomatic Corps for the kindness shown me.

After a week in Africa - such a short time yet one filled with indelible memories - I wish to share with you a few of the impressions and concerns which I have experienced in my first contact with the African continent.

When I came to Africa at the invitation of the civil authorities and of my brother Bishops, I did so as the Head of the Catholic Church. But I also came as a humble servant entrusted by God's providence with a mission to all mankind: *The mission of proclaiming the dignity and fundamental equality of all human beings* and their right to live in a world of justice and peace, of brotherhood and solidarity.

2. The purpose of my journey is, in the first place, *religious and spiritual*. I wish to confirm my brother Bishops, the clergy, religious and laity in their faith in God the Creator and Father, and in the one Lord Jesus Christ. I wish also to celebrate the common faith and charity that unites us, to rejoice with them in the communion that binds us all together in one family, in the Mystical Body of Christ. I bring to them the greeting of the Apostle Paul: "All the Churches of Christ greet you"[1]. My coming to the Church in Africa is meant to be a witnessing to the universality of the Church and a rejoicing in the richness of its various expressions. For "in the mind of the Lord the Church is universal by vocation and mission, but when she puts down her roots in a variety of cultural, social and human terrains, she takes on different external expressions and appearances in each part of the world"[2].

By virtue of her mission and nature, the Church is not tied to any given form of culture, or to any political, economic, or social system. By her very universality, she can enter into communion with various cultures and realities, creating a mutual enrichment[3]. By virtue of that same universality she can also create a very close bond between diverse human communities and nations, provided that they acknowledge and respect her right to freedom in the carrying out of her specific mission.

3. Here I feel that we have *a common mission*. As individual diplomats you are mandated to represent and foster the interests of your respective States. As a group, you are also bearers of a mission that transcends regional and national boundaries, for it is also part of your mission to foster better understanding among people, closer collaboration on a worldwide scale - in a word, to be the promoters of the unity of the whole world. It is the greatness of your task to be the builders of international peace and justice in an age that is a witness at the same time to growing interdependence and to the stronger affirmation of each nation's own identity and dignity.

Yours is a noble even if difficult task: while serving your own nation, you are also the artisans of the common good of the whole human family, working together to save the earth for humanity, to ensure that the world's riches reach all human beings, including our brothers and sisters who are now excluded by social injustice. As diplomats, you are involved in the establishing of a new order of international relations based on the fundamental and inescapable demands of justice and peace. And those of you here present who represent international or regional organizations are also engaged - though by different methods and means - in the process of concentrating the efforts of all nations on building a just and fraternal world.

4. I am sure that your experience in different parts of the world as diplomats or international servants, together with the familiarity that you have acquired of the African scene, has created in you a keen awareness of the major problems that face humanity today - especially *the global issues arising from the economic and social disparities that exist in the world community*. When I spoke to the Thirty-fourth General Assembly of the United Nations Organization, I was able to draw attention to this fundamental problem when I said: "It is no secret that the abyss separating the minority of the excessively rich from the multitude of the destitute is a very grave symptom in the life of any society. This must also be said with even greater insistence with regard to the abyss separating countries and regions of the earth"[4].

It is a great contradiction of our day and age that these glaring disparities can exist, and that the gap which separates rich and poor countries, or rich and poor continents, is still widening rather than decreasing, at a time when peoples have become more aware than ever before of their interdependence. Is it not a sad fact that the efforts - so worthwhile in themselves - of the international organizations and of the different nations in bilateral and multilateral initiatives have not been able to draw the poorer countries out of the vicious circle of poverty and underdevelopment?

Why is it then that these efforts have not produced better and more lasting results? Why have they not given hope to the developing countries - the hope that their own resources, fraternal aid, and especially the hard work of their people would enable them to chart their own development course and satisfy their essential needs?

5. I am convinced that we all agree that the only way to eliminate inequalities is through the *coordinated cooperation* of all the countries *in a spirit of true partnership*. In this context, much has been said and written about the importance of revitalizing what has been called the North-South dialogue. Without accepting an oversimplified view of a world divided into a rich North and a poor South, one must concede that this distinction has a certain foundation in fact, since Northern countries generally control the world's industry and economy. The Holy See cannot but encourage every initiative that aims at looking honestly at this situation, and at

achieving an agreement among all parties on the necessary action to be taken. But at the same time, I would ask the question: Why is it that such initiatives encounter such difficulty and fail to achieve tangible and lasting results? The answer is to be found primarily, not in the economic or monetary spheres, but in an area of much deeper dimensions - in the domain of moral and spiritual imperatives. New insights and a fundamental change in attitude are called for.

The difficult and controversial subjects which divide richer and poorer nations cannot be faced as long as an attitude of prejudice persists; these subjects must be approached in a spirit of trust and mutual openness, in a spirit of honest evaluation of reality and in a generous willingness to share.

Above all, the examination of the North-South problems must be made with a renewed conviction that no solution can be found unless it is rooted in the truth about man. The complete truth about man is the necessary condition for people to live together harmoniously and to come to an agreement on solutions that fully respect the dignity of all human beings.

6. Your presence here in an African capital, Ladies and Gentlemen, is of great significance for your countries and for the organizations that you represent. But it is also very meaningful for the country that offers you its hospitality, for all Africa, and for the whole world. This is a lofty vision but it is also the necessary condition for success in your endeavours to bring about better and more just relations between peoples and nations. Each diplomatic community is in a way a proving ground where you test your own attitudes and insights against *a vision of the world where man is central to all history and to all progress*. My message to you therefore - the message of one who is aware of his mission as a servant of God and a defender of man - is this: only a world that is truly human can be a world that is peaceful and strong.

Thank you.

[1] Rom. 16, 16.

[2] Pauli VI *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 62.

[3] Cfr. *Gaudium et Spes*, 58.

[4] Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Allocutio ad Nationem Unitarum Legatos*, 18, die 2 oct. 1979: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, II, 2 (1979) 535-536.

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
ON THE OCCASION OF THE AWARDING
OF THE JOHN XXIII INTERNATIONAL PEACE PRIZE**

*Kumasi (Ghana)
Friday, 9 May 1980*

*Peace to all of you here present,
Peace to Africa and the world!
Dear Friends,*

It is with great pleasure that I accept and approve the proposal of the John XXIII International Peace Prize Foundation to honour the six catechists here present, who have been chosen to receive the John XXIII International Peace Prize.

This award is linked to the figure of John XXIII. In his Encyclical "[Pacem in Terris](#)" he set forth in broad outline the principles on which a peaceful order of relations must be built: "founded on truth, built up on justice, nurtured and animated by charity, and brought into effect under the auspices of freedom"^[1]. In the example of his life he showed that peace must always be the first concern of all human beings, whatever their function or social condition may be. By establishing an award for peace he wished to encourage every initiative that has as its goal the fostering of fraternal relations between individuals and peoples.

The objective of the awarding of this prize, according to the intention of its founder, is to give solemn recognition to the merits of persons or institutions who have made an outstanding contribution to peace on earth. After Mother Teresa of Calcutta and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Foundation now proposes as recipients of the Prize six individuals who represent a group of thousands upon thousands of faithful servants who effectively uphold the ideal of peace. These are the Catechists of Africa.

Chosen from among their people, the catechists of Africa have unceasingly worked for their people. Accepting hardship and personal sacrifice, they have given without reserve the best of themselves to their brothers and sisters. Faithful believers in the teachings of Christ, they have been instrumental in helping their fellow Africans to revere God, the Father of all; to respect the dignity of every person; to love their fellow human beings; and to foster reconciliation and pardon. Often untiring travellers, and always faithful servants of the local community, they have helped to break down divisive barriers, and to assist their brothers and sisters in need. Some of the catechists, in particularly trying circumstances, have endured physical or moral hardship and suffering in order to bear witness to religious freedom or to defend it. They have thus testified by their own lives that the relationship of man to God and the freedom to profess this relationship publicly are at the very foundation of peace. Yes, the catechists of Africa have truly been, and are, heralds of peace!

Trusting that this motivation will be admired by all men and women of good will, in Africa and in the whole world, on this the ninth day of May 1980, in the City of Kumasi, in the Nation of Ghana, I, John Paul II, bestow on the catechists here present the honour of the John XXIII International Peace Prize, for the glory of the Heavenly Father from whom all good things come, in memory of my Predecessor John XXIII, and as an encouragement to all especially the youth of Africa, that they may persevere in the ways of peace.

The peace of the Lord be with you always!

[1] [Pacem in Terris](#), V.

HOMILY OF JOHN PAUL II

Kumasi (Ghana), 9 May 1980

Dear brothers and sisters,

1. Today is a day of great joy, and I have looked forward to this day for a long time. I have wanted to come and tell the catechists how much I love them, how much the Church needs them. Today is also a day of deep meaning because Jesus Christ - the Son of God, the Lord of history, the Saviour of the world - is present in our midst. Through his holy Gospel he speaks to us in the words that he once addressed to his disciples: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and so, I am with you always..." .

2. This command and this promise of Jesus were the inspiration for the evangelization of Ghana and all Africa, and they have shaped the lives of all who have collaborated in the cause of the Gospel. In a special way these words have been taken to heart by numerous catechists over the past century. And today I wish to manifest the Church's profound esteem for these devoted workers in the service of the Gospel. I express the gratitude of the whole Catholic Church to these catechists who are here today, to their predecessors in the faith and, to their fellow catechists throughout the continent of Africa - gratitude for helping to make disciples for Christ; for helping people to believe that Jesus is the Son of God; for helping to instruct their brothers and sisters in his life, and thus to build up his Body, the Church. This catechizing activity has been accomplished by word and example, and the dedication of countless catechists and their deep attachment to the person of Jesus Christ remain a chapter of glory in the history of this land and this continent.

3. The Church recognizes in these catechists people called to exercise a particular ecclesial role, a special sharing in the responsibility for the advancement of the Gospel. She sees them as witness of faith, servants of Jesus Christ and his Church, effective collaborators in the mission of establishing, developing and fostering the life of the Christian community. In the history of evangelization many of these catechists have in fact been teachers of religion, leaders in their communities, zealous lay missionaries, and examples of faith. They have stood faithfully by the missionaries and the local clergy, supporting their ministry while fulfilling their own distinctive task. The catechists have rendered many services connected with communicating Christ, implanting the Church and bringing the transforming and regenerative power of the Gospel ever more into the lives of their brothers and sisters. They have assisted people in many human needs and contributed to development and progress.

4. In all of this they have explicitly made known the name and person of Jesus Christ, his teaching, his life, his promises and his Kingdom. The communities that they have helped to build up were based on the same elements as were found in the early Church: on the Apostles' teaching and fellowship, on the Eucharist and prayers . Thus the Lordship of Christ was

fostered in one community after another, from one generation to the next. Through their generous work, Christ's command is continually fulfilled and his promise verified.

5. The Church is not only grateful for what has been accomplished by the catechists in the past, but she is confident for the future. Despite new conditions, new requirements and new obstacles, the relevance of this great apostolate will remain undiminished, because there will always be a need to develop an initial faith and to lead people to the fullness of Christian life. An increased realization of the dignity and importance of the role of the catechist is but one consequence of the Second Vatican Council's insistence on the fact that the whole Church shares responsibility for the Gospel. Only with the collaboration of her catechists will the Church be able to fulfil adequately the challenge that I described in my Apostolic Exhortation on Catechesis in our time: "As the twentieth century draws to a close, the Church is bidden by God and by events - each of them a call from him - to renew her trust in catechetical activity as a prime aspect of her mission. She is bidden to offer catechesis her best resources in people and energy, without sparing effort, toil or material means, in order to organize it better and to train qualified personnel. This is no mere human calculation; it is an attitude of faith" .

6. The Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, numerous Bishops and Episcopal Conferences have placed strong emphasis on the formation' of catechists, and in this they are worthy of the highest praise. The destiny of the Church in Africa is undoubtedly linked with the success of this initiative. I wish therefore to give full encouragement to this wonderful work. The future of catechetical activity will depend on sound programmes of preparation, where there is ever greater instruction for the catechists, where priority is given to the spiritual and; doctrinal formation of the catechists, and where catechists are able to experience in some measure the authentic sense of Christian community that they are called upon to build.

The instruments of catechesis must also be given due attention, including effective catechetical materials that take into account the need for the incarnation of the Gospel in determined local cultures. Moreover, the whole Church must feel committed to help face the difficulties and problems inherent in sustaining catechetical programmes. In a special way, the whole community of the Church must show its esteem for the important vocation of catechists, who must feel supported by their brothers and sisters.

7. Above all, to ensure the success of all catechetical activity, the aim of catechesis itself must remain crystal clear: catechesis is a work of faith that is far beyond any technique; it is a commitment of Christ's Church. Its primary and essential object is the mystery of Christ; its definitive aim is to put people in communion with Jesus Christ . Through catechesis the activity of Jesus the Teacher goes on; he elicits from his brethren and adherence to his person, and through his word and sacraments he leads them to his Father and to the fullness of life in the Most Holy Trinity.

8. Gathered here today to celebrate the Eucharistic Sacrifice, we express our trust in the power of the Holy Spirit to continue to raise up and sustain, for the glory of God's Kingdom, new generations of catechists, who will faithfully transmit the Good News of salvation and bear witness to Christ and him crucified.

9. Today the Church offers to the catechists the sign of Christ's love, the great symbol of Redemption: the Cross of the Saviour. For catechists of every age the Cross is the credential of authenticity and the measure of success. The message of the Cross is truly "the power of

God" .

Dear catechists, dear brothers and sisters: in fulfilling your role, in communicating Christ, remember the words of a pioneer catechist of the fourth century, Saint Cyril of Jerusalem: "The Catholic Church is proud of all Christ's actions, but her greatest boast is the Cross" .

With this Cross, with the crucifix that you receive today as a sign of your mission in the Church, go forward confidently and joyfully. And remember too that Mary is always standing next to Jesus, close to you; she is always by the Cross. She will lead you safely to the victory of the Resurrection; and she will help you to communicate to others the Paschal Mystery of her Son.

Beloved catechists of Ghana and all Africa: Christ calls you to his service; the Church sends you forth. The Pope blesses you, and he commends you to the Queen of heaven. Amen.

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE BISHOPS OF GHANA

*Kumasi
Friday, 9 May 1980*

Venerable and dear Brothers in our Lord Jesus Christ,

1. My coming among you today is intimately linked to Christ and his Gospel. I have come to share with you and the whole Catholic Church in Ghana *the joy of your centenary celebrations*. Together we praise the grace of God that initiated and sustained *the full process of evangelisation* in your midst: missionaries were sent to preach the word of God to your ancestors; these people heard the message of salvation; they believed and called upon him in whom they put their faith, confessing with their lips that Jesus is Lord and believing in their hearts that God raised him from the dead^[1].

Through the sacraments your people came to share in the death and Resurrection of Christ and were grafted into the vital organic unity of the Church. Generous missionary Congregations realized the need for workers in the vineyard of the Lord, and conversions were made through divine grace.

In 1935 the first two Ghanaian priests were ordained, and in 1950 the Hierarchy was established.

And today there are two Metropolitan Sees and seven dioceses. The Church is thus fully implanted in Ghana, but her mission is not yet complete. By reason of their full membership in the Body of Christ, Ghanaian Catholics are called to be workers for evangelisation, in a Church that is, by her nature, missionary in her totality^[2]. Only in accepting their own responsibility for the spread of the Gospel do the Catholic people fulfil the vocation to which they are called.

2. This great ecclesial reality of an evangelised and evangelising Church in Ghana, which explains the depth of our joy today, is celebrated *in a spirit of Catholic unity*. It is a unity that

belongs to your individual local Churches: priests, religious and laity united with the Bishop, who presides in love and service, and who is called to be an example to everyone in humility and holiness of life.

This Catholic unity is further manifested in the solidarity of the sons and daughters of this country with the missionaries, who continue to give their fraternal service - deeply appreciated and very necessary - for the benefit of each local Church, under the direction of an autochthonous pastor.

The unity of this centenary celebration is likewise the unity of all the Bishops of this country with the entire College of Bishops united with the Successor of Peter, and intent on proclaiming the one Gospel of Christ and ensuring the enactment of Catholic unity in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, which is at one and the same time the expression of the worship of an individual community and of the universal Church. This is a special motive of joy for me as I celebrate with you your centenary celebrations. I wish to assure you of my gratitude for everything you have done, as pastors of local Churches, to preserve unity, you who likewise share responsibility for the Church throughout the world. Your fidelity and zeal are themselves an effective contribution to the spread of the Kingdom.

3. Be assured that all your efforts to proclaim the Gospel directly and indirectly are a great credit to the Church. On my part I am close to you in all the joys and disappointments, the challenges and hopes of your ministry of the word, and in your sacramental ministry. I am close to you in all your concrete pastoral initiatives, in everything that brings the message of salvation into the lives of the people.

A reflection on the essential and constitutional patrimony of the Catholic faith, which is identical for all people of all places and times, is a great help to the pastors of the Church as they ponder *the requirements of the "inculturation" of the Gospel in the life of the people*. You are familiar with what Paul VI called the "task of assimilating the essence of the Gospel message and of transposing it, without the slightest betrayal of its essential truth, into the language that these particular people understand"[3].

He singled out as subject to certain adaptations the areas of liturgical expression, catechesis, theological formulation, secondary ecclesial structures, and ministries. As local pastors you are eminently fitted for this work, because you are sons of the people to whom you are sent with the message of faith; in addition, in your episcopal ordination you have received the same "governing Spirit" who was communicated to Jesus and by him to his Apostles for the building up of his Church. This work is of God; it is an activity of the living Body of Christ; it is a requirement of the Church as a truly universal means of salvation.

And so with serenity and confidence and with profound openness towards the universal Church, the Bishops must carry on the task of inculturation of the Gospel for the good of each people, *precisely so that Christ may be communicated to every man, woman and child*.

In this process, cultures themselves must be uplifted, transformed and permeated by Christ's original message of divine truth, without harming what is noble in them. Hence worthy African traditions are to be preserved. Moreover, in accordance with the full truth of the Gospels and in harmony with the Magisterium of the Church, living and dynamic African Christian traditions are to be consolidated.

As you pursue this work in close union with the Apostolic See and the entire Church, you are strengthened in knowing that the responsibility for this activity is shared also by your brother Bishops throughout the world. This is an important consequence of the doctrine of collegiality, in which every Bishop shares responsibility for the rest of the Church; by the same token, his own Church in which by divine right he exercises ordinary jurisdiction is also the object of a common episcopal responsibility in the two dimensions of making the Gospel incarnate in the local Church: 1) *preserving unaltered the content of the Catholic faith and maintaining ecclesial unity throughout the world*; and 2) *bringing forth from cultures original expressions of Christian life, celebration and thought*, whereby the Gospel is brought into the heart of peoples and their cultures.

Venerable Brothers, your people are called to the highest ideals and to the most lofty virtues. In this saving power Christ is present in the humanity of Africa, or as I have already said during my visit to this continent: "Christ, in the members of his Body, is himself African".

4. There are many individual aspects of your apostolate that are worthy of special mention and support. Of particular importance for the future of your local Churches is every effort that is made to *foster vocations to the priesthood and religious life*.

The faithful are called to share responsibility for this dimension of the Church; they exercise this responsibility by esteem and respect for these vocations and by helping to create the sound spiritual atmosphere of Christian families and other communities in which a vocation can develop and can persevere. Vigilance is needed on the part of priests to detect the signs of a vocation. Above all, the effectiveness of all these human efforts is linked to the prayer of the Church and to the witness of priests and religious.

When your people see priests and religious living a life of authentic celibacy in intimacy with Christ, when they perceive the human fulfilment that comes from the total giving of oneself in the service of the Gospel, when they observe the joy that comes from bearing witness to Christ - then the priesthood and the religious life are attractive vocations for youth, who will then more easily hear Christ's personal invitation to them: Come, follow me!

Another dimension that I would like to stress in this regard is the missionary dimension of your Church with regard to the needs of sister Churches on the African continent and beyond. I understand your concern about the need of your own Christian communities to be guided by priests chosen by God from among their own people. But the Church is missionary by nature. And let us always remember that God will never fail to bless those who give with generosity. The promotion of missionary vocations - either in the framework of the *Fidei Donum* formula or through membership in international missionary societies - will in its turn incite the local community to greater confidence in God's grace and to a deeper awareness of faith. It will open hearts to God's love.

5. I know that you are committed to the advancement of the role of women in the Church and in society. It is an expression of this same concern to promote women's vocations to the religious life.

African women have willingly been bearers of life and guardians of family values. Similarly, the consecration of women in radical self-giving to the Lord in chastity, obedience, and poverty constitutes an important way of bringing to your local Churches the life of Christ and

an awareness of a larger human community and a divine communion. This requires of course that they be carefully formed, theologically and spiritually, so that they can assume their rightful place as workers for evangelisation, exemplifying the true meaning of religious life in an African context, and thus enriching the whole Church.

6. In the beautiful celebration in the stadium and by honouring the catechists, I have already expressed my esteem for them, as well as my thoughts on the; value of this institution for the Church - its value for the future as for the past. I shall not expand this point further except to repeat the words I addressed to the Bishops in my Apostolic Exhortation: “Dearly beloved Brothers, you have here a special mission within your Churches: you are beyond all others the ones primarily responsible, for catechises. ...You can be sure that if catechesis is done well in your local Churches, everything else will be easier to do”[4].

7. In this context I would draw attention to a special aspect of the apostolate: the question of the media. All over the world *the communications media offer special opportunities for the spread of the Gospel and for the useful presentation of information from the viewpoint of charity and truth.*

Ghana and all Africa are no exception. Through your interest and collaboration may the mass media truly perform their providential role at the service of humanity. For the Church these are splendid instruments to preach the message of Christ, as from the housetops[5]. Be assured of my admiration for your efforts to utilize these means as often as possible. In this regard, you deserve great praise for setting up *The Standard*, which I pray will ever assist you in the task of evangelisation.

8. Linked with evangelisation is the work of development, which must continue to go on in Africa.

In imitation of Christ, who was sensitive to the uplifting of humanity in all its aspects, the Church works for the total well-being of man. The laity have a distinctive part to play in the area of development; they have also been given a special charisma in order to bring the presence of the serving Christ into all areas of human affairs.

The human being asking to be uplifted from poverty and want is the same person in need of redemption and eternal life. Likewise the entire Church must serve development by offering to the world her total vision of man, and by proclaiming ceaselessly the preminence of spiritual values[6].

Providence has endowed your people with an innate understanding of this fact. Only by being sensitive to every need can the Church continue to render her many services, but one of her most effective contributions to progress will be to point out that *the goal of personal development is found only in a transcendent humanism*, which is attained by union with Christ .

9. There are many other aspects to our pastoral ministry and we cannot now speak about all of them. But *as Bishops let us call our people constantly to conversion of life, and by our example let us lead the way.* The importance of the Sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation and of the Eucharist cannot be overemphasized. In both of these we are the ministers of God’s mercy and his love.

At the same time, as Bishops we are called to bear a consistent witness to Christ the High Priest and Pontiff of salvation by being signs of holiness in his Church. A difficult task? Yes, Brothers. But this is our vocation, and the Holy Spirit is upon us. Moreover, the effectiveness of our pastoral ministry depends on our holiness of life. Let us not be afraid, for the Mother of Jesus is with us. She is in our midst today and always. And we are strong through her prayers and safe in her care. Regina Caeli, laetare, alleluia!

[1] Cf. *Rom* 10:9.

[2] Cf. *Ad Gentes*, 35.

[3] *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 63.

[4] *Catechesi Tradendae*, 63.

[5] Cf. *Mt* 10:27.

[6] Address to the United Nations, 2 October 1979, no. 14.

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE SEMINARIANS

*Kumasi (Ghana)
Friday, 9 May 1980*

Dear seminarians,

1. I am always happy to talk to young men who are preparing for the priesthood. Today I am particularly happy to meet you in your own country.

2. Even though you are young, you are able by your lives to teach the world a great lesson. What is this lesson? It is the lesson of *faith*. Your lives show that you believe in Jesus Christ and that you want to follow him. You accept him as God, as the Son of God who took on a human nature, who became man, and who became your brother and mine. You believe that he died on the Cross, and became your Saviour and mine. And you believe that he rose from the dead, and made it possible for you and me and everybody to live for ever. This is the Jesus whom you have come to know and love, the Jesus in whom you have put your faith.

3. Yes, you believe in the Person of Jesus, and you also believe that his grace is strong - that it can overcome sin. You believe that Jesus can give you the grace to follow him, to come after him, to be like him. *And that is what you want to do: to be like Jesus the priest* - to spread the Good News that Jesus brought, to tell the world about salvation, and to give people the bread of eternal life.

4. So faith in Jesus is important for you now and in the future. *Your life as a seminarian depends on faith*; faith is the foundation of the life of every priest. Faith means accepting Jesus into your lives, taking his message into your hearts, obeying his commandments. It also means being filled with the joy and love of Jesus. And the more this happens, the more you will be able to show Jesus to the world - the Jesus who lives in you and who wants to work through you.

When you live by faith and follow Christ's commandments, *you are able to give a dynamic example to other young people*. You are able to show by your lives and by the example of your Christian joy that Jesus' love is important - important for you in your vocation, and important for all your brothers and sisters who are trying to discover the fullness of their humanity. Living in this way, you can see that you have already begun the task of communicating Christ, of bringing him to your friends and to the other youth of Ghana.

5. At the same time your fidelity to Christ, your courage to say yes to your special vocation, your faith in the power of Jesus to sustain you in his love during your whole life is a strong support for other young people of your age who have heard the call of the Good Shepherd and want to follow it faithfully. You know how much your country and all Africa needs priests - workers in the Lord's harvest. Remember the words of Jesus: "... lift up your eyes, and see how the fields are white for the harvest"^[1].

And pray for vocations, pray for perseverance in your own vocation, pray that the Church in Africa will have the strength and fervour to supply the priests that Christ needs to preach his Gospel and to carry his message of salvation throughout this continent.

6. Dear seminarians: stay close to Jesus through prayer and the Holy Eucharist. And so by the way you live, let everybody know that you really do have faith, that you really believe in our Lord Jesus Christ.

And stay close also to our Blessed Mother Mary and to her Immaculate Heart. When Mary said yes to the angel, the mystery of Redemption took shape beneath her Heart. This pure Heart of Mary was the inspiration for many of the missionaries who brought the word of God to the African people. And for the Church today this Heart of Mary continues to express the mystery of the Mother in Redemption .

In the name of Jesus, I bless you all. And I commend you and your families and friends to Mary, who is the Mother of us all.

^[1] Jn 4:35.

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE BISHOPS
COMING FROM OTHER AFRICAN DIOCESES**

*Kumasi (Ghana)
Friday, 9 May 1980*

My dear Brother Bishops,

1. It is a joy for me to be with you today. You have come from your respective Dioceses - and I from Rome - and all of us have assembled here in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We truly feel his presence in our midst. Indeed, we have come to Ghana to celebrate his Gospel, to celebrate the centenary of the implantation of his Church in this region. Our thoughts are turned therefore to the great reality of evangelization. This is very natural for us, since we are the Successors of the Twelve and, like them, are called to be servants of the Gospel, proclaiming Jesus Christ and his message of Redemption.

Our ministry makes many demands on us. The effective preaching of the Gospel, which is "the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith"[1], requires our constant efforts in going out to the People of God with a deep understanding of their culture, their pastoral needs and the pressures put upon them by the modern world.

Evangelization requires farsighted planning on our part, the utilization of the proper means and the full collaboration of the local Churches. But I wish to limit myself today to a brief consideration on *the content of evangelization*, on what Paul VI called its "foundation and centre" and what he described as being "a clear proclamation that in Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, who died and rose from the dead, salvation is offered to all men as a gift of God's grace and mercy"[2].

2. As Bishops we must reflect not only on our duty, but also on the *immense privilege* it is to bring this fundamental message of salvation to the people. This is the nature of our divine mission, this explains our human fulfilment: *to proclaim salvation in Jesus Christ*.

What a wonderful ministry it is to preach a Gospel of redemption in Jesus, to explain to our people how they have been chosen by God the Father to live in Christ Jesus, how the Father "rescued us from the power of darkness and brought us into the Kingdom of his beloved Son. Through him we have redemption, the forgiveness of our sins"[3].

3. Christ's gift of salvation gives rise to our sacramental ministry and to all our efforts to build up the communion of the Church, a redeemed community living the new life of Christ. Because our message is the message of salvation, it is also a constant invitation to our people to respond to God's gift, to live a life worthy of the calling that they have received[4].

The message of salvation brings with it an invitation to our people to praise God for his goodness, to rejoice in his gift, to forgive others just as they themselves have been forgiven, and to love others just as they themselves have been loved. God gives this great gift of salvation through his Church, *through our ministry*.

In accordance with God's will, let us go forward in our evangelizing activities, announcing with perseverance the Good News of salvation, and proclaiming explicitly: "It is in Christ and through his blood that we have been redeemed and our sins forgiven, so immeasurably generous in God's favour to us"[5]. This proclamation is fundamental to all our moral doctrine, to our social teaching, to our pastoral concern for the poor. It is the basis of our

pastoral ministry to the needy, the suffering and those in prison. It is fundamental to everything we do, to our whole episcopal ministry.

Dear brothers: Praised be Jesus Christ who has called us to proclaim his salvation and who sustains us by his love. May he keep us strong in joy, persevering in prayer together with his Mother Mary, and united to the end.

Praised be Jesus Christ.

[1] *Rom.* 1, 16.

[2] *Pauli VI Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 38.

[3] *Col* 1, 14.

[4] *Cfr. Eph.* 4, 1.

[5] *Ibid.* 1, 7-8.

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II AT THE DEPARTURE FROM GHANA

*Accra
Saturday, 10 May 1980*

Dear Friends in Ghana,

1. The journeys of the Pope to the different continents and countries of the world all have one characteristic in common: the visits are always too short! Perhaps too short for you, but certainly too short for me! I would have loved to spend more time with you, to travel through your country from North to South, from East to West, to be with you in your homes, to visit your children in their schools, to accompany you to your fields or to the river, and to listen to your songs. But so many more of your African brothers and sisters are waiting for me.

The two days that I have spent with you have been days of great joy and spiritual consolation for me. I shall for ever cherish in my memory and in my heart the impressions of this happy occasion. I shall remember your friendly people and courteous authorities, the smiling faces of your children and the wisdom of your elders.

I shall above all carry with me the image of a people that wants to be faithful to its own cultural heritage, and at the same time move forward in peace, and in truth - which is the power of peace - towards a more just situation through constant material, social and moral progress.

2. My gratitude for the hospitality shown by this land and its people to the Head of the Catholic Church, who is the servant of humanity, will be expressed in fervent prayer for each one of you and for your entire nation. I shall ask God, who is all-powerful and good, who created all things and without whom no life can exist, to guide and strengthen this nation in the pursuit of true happiness for all its citizens. Because we are all children of one and the same heavenly Father, created to his image and likeness^[1], every human being, every Ghanaian has a fundamental right to the conditions that are in keeping with his or her dignity.

I shall raise my prayer to God that Ghana may achieve true progress through the development of all the natural and human resources with which it has been blessed, and that it will benefit from the will of the international community to create throughout the world and the African continent just and equitable relations in all fields of human endeavour. I shall pray especially that the continuing development of Ghana will be achieved while safeguarding the authentic human values which have been, up to the present, the glory of your people: hospitality, magnanimity, respect for the elders, a sense of community, and reference to God in all your relations.

3. My deep gratitude goes to His Excellency the President of Ghana for his courteous and warm welcome, which I would be most happy to reciprocate in the Vatican. I thank the authorities and all who have given so much of their time and effort to prepare this visit and to make it such a rewarding experience for me. I express my cordial appreciation also to the journalists and to all the people of the media, through whom it was able to reach out to a vast audience, telling all Ghanaians that the Pope holds them in his heart; at the same time the world was able to come into close contact with the warm and noble people of this land.

I cannot take leave of this hospitable country without addressing a special word of thanks to you the Bishops and the whole Catholic community for everything you have done to give me this unforgettable welcome, but also, and even more, for what you are: true Ghanaians and true Christians. Be "firm in your faith"^[2]. Always remember that you have been baptized in Christ Jesus, and that therefore, beyond any differences of ethnic origin, education or position, "you are all one in Christ Jesus"^[3].

Goodbye now! Thank you, and may God bless this beloved land of Ghana!

^[1] Cfr. *Gen.* 1, 26.

^[2] *1 Petr.* 5, 9.

^[3] *Gal.* 3, 28.