



The Holy See

JOHN PAUL II

ANGELUS

Castel Gandolfo

Sunday, 25 July 2004

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

1. During these days of rest and relaxation, I often think of the dramatic conditions in various regions of the world. Today I would like to draw your attention in particular to the tragic events that for some time now have marked certain countries on the beloved Continent of Africa.

2. For more than 18 years, North Uganda has been embroiled in an inhuman war that involves millions of people, especially children. Many of them, in the grip of fear and deprived of any kind of future, feel forced to "become soldiers". I appeal to the International Community and to national political leaders to put an end to this tragic fighting and see that real prospects of peace are offered to the entire Ugandan Nation.

Equally disturbing is the plight of the beloved peoples of *Darfur*, the western region of Sudan that borders on Chad. The war, which has gathered momentum in recent months, has brought ever greater poverty, desperation and death. At least 20 harsh battles in Sudan have resulted in vast numbers of dead, evacuees and refugees. How can we remain indifferent? I address a heartfelt appeal to the political leaders and international organizations not to forget these harshly-trying brothers and sisters of ours.

3. The Christian community is striving to meet the needs of these emergencies. The Bishops in Uganda, with the help of other dioceses of the world and volunteer organizations, are working generously to achieve national reconciliation and provide assistance to those in difficulty. Just a few days ago, I decided to send Archbishop Paul Josef Cordes, President of the Pontifical Council

Cor Unum, to Darfur, to bring those troubled peoples the spiritual and material solidarity of the Holy See and of the universal Church.

I ask all Christians to pray for our brothers and sisters in Africa, on whom I invoke the maternal protection of Mary.

After leading the Angelus, the Holy Father greeted the pilgrims and visitors in various languages:

I am delighted to greet the Mayor and people of Castel Gandolfo who have come to visit me as they do every year on the occasion of the traditional *Peach Festival*. I warmly thank them for coming and for their gift of the typical fruit of this beloved region. I then greet the Italian pilgrims, especially, the group of young people from the Roman Parish of St Justin the Martyr, and the Novices of the Daughters of Our Lady Help of Christians.

I greet you, dear French-speaking pilgrims. At the school of the Virgin Mary, you will find a reliable guide for the following of Christ.

To all the English-speaking visitors who have joined in our prayer today I offer warm greetings. May the Lord keep you and your families in his loving care always.

I cordially welcome the German-speaking pilgrims and visitors. May Christ's peace accompany you on your way! Happy and blessed holidays!

I cordially greet the Spanish-speaking pilgrims, especially the group of The Work. Today is also the feast of the Apostle St James the Greater during the Holy Year of Compostella. May he lead you all to Jesus. Have a happy Sunday!

I wish you all a good Sunday!

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