



# The Holy See

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## APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO THE FAR EAST AND MAURITIUS

### HOLY MASS IN THE "ISTORA SENAYAN" STADIUM

#### *HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II*

*Jakarta (Indonesia)*

*Monday, 9 October 1989*

*Saudara-saudaraku yang terkasih dalam Yesus Kristus: para Uskup, Imam, Bruder, Frater dan Suster, serta umat beriman yang berhimpun di sini.*

*1. Saya ingin mengajak Anda semua untuk bersama saya bersyukur kepada Tuhan, bahwa Ia telah memperkenankan kita bertemu dari muka ke muka.*

1. In every age *the Church is on pilgrimage*, journeying to the peoples of every continent, preaching the Good News of God's saving love to those far and near. Today, after more than four hundred years of the Church's presence in this archipelago, that pilgrimage is experiencing a moment of great spiritual intensity *here, in Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia*. For the second time the Pope, the Successor of Peter, has come to Indonesia. I come with the same love and esteem which brought Pope Paul VI to Jakarta in 1970. All the travels of the Bishop of Rome are a response to the command of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ whose servants we are. He enjoined on his disciples: "You shall be my witnesses... to the end of the earth" (*Act. 1, 8*). Therefore, in union of heart with all of you I am profoundly happy to repeat on Indonesian soil the words of the Responsorial Psalm: "*I will sing to you, O Lord... of mercy and justice*" (*Ps. 101 (100), 1*).

2. My pastoral visit to you, my Catholic brothers and sisters, is part of my ministry which is, above all, a service to the faith and unity of the universal Church. I have also come as a friend of every

Indonesian in our common humanity and our common concern for the development and peace of the world in which we live. I greet *the public authorities* present at this solemn Eucharistic celebration and I express my appreciation to President Soeharto and to the Government for graciously inviting me and thus making this visit possible.

In a special way my greetings go to Cardinal Darmojuwono, to Archbishop Soekoto and to all the bishops of *the Catholic Church in Indonesia* who repeatedly made known their desire for me to come. My affection reaches out to all the priests, religious and laity. It will be impossible for me to meet all of you during these days, but I assure each one of you of my concern and prayerful encouragement.

In the fellowship that unites us through the sacramental bond of Baptism, I express my cordial esteem for *all the members of the various Christian communities present in Indonesia*. And to our *Muslim brothers and sisters*, who are so numerous in this country, I extend the hand of sincere and heartfelt friendship in our common belief in the one God, our Creator and merciful Lord..

*Kepada para anggauta semua agama saya ucapkan: Semoga damai sejahtera dan kasih karunia berada ditengah-tengah kita.*

3. "*Laetentur insulae multae*": *let the many islands rejoice* (Ps. 96 (95) 1). For Bishop Walter Staal, Apostolic Vicar of Batavia at the end of the last century, this motto taken from the Psalms expressed the significance of the Church's presence in this vast archipelago. Today, the whole Church in these islands cries out with joy: "*Laetentur insulae multae*!"

Dear brother bishops and faithful of the Church in Indonesia: because the bonds of faith, sacramental life and ecclesial communion receive their fullest expression in the celebration of the Eucharist – especially in this Eucharist which gathers the people of God around their bishops in union with the Pope, the head of the Episcopal College – we live this moment with hearts filled with gratitude to the Most Blessed Trinity.

Our hearts sing a hymn of thanksgiving to our heavenly Father for the life of the Church in Indonesia: for her history, for the *missionaries* who have preached God's word with wisdom and love, for the *holiness of life* which the Gospel has inspired, for the good deeds that have been done in its name, for the solidarity it has produced in the building up of modern Indonesia as a unified and dynamic country on the road to ever greater human development, social harmony and peace. We raise our hearts in thanksgiving for the vitality of each of the particular Churches represented here.

As sons and daughters of independent Indonesia, Catholics have nurtured a profound sense of pride in their country. *Pro Ecclesia et Patria*: "*We must be fully Catholic and fully Indonesian*". These words are deeply inscribed in the modern history of the nation. They express the attitude of

many Catholics during the struggle for independence, and they continue to inspire the Church's life in the Indonesia of today.

4. In today's Gospel reading we heard a significant teaching of Jesus concerning the religious and political dimensions of our existence in society. Some religious leaders had asked Jesus: "Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar, or not?" (*Luc. 20, 22*). Pointing to one of the coins in circulation in their country, Jesus answers with a question: "Whose likeness and inscription has it.? They replied, 'Caesar's'". Then, in response to their initial question Jesus said: "*Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's*" (*Ibid. 20, 25*).

By replying in this way Jesus acknowledges a distinction but not a separation between the kingdom of God which he preached and the earthly realm to which all belong as citizens of their country and members of the one great human family (Cfr. Congr. Pro Doctrina Fidei *Libertatis Conscientia*, 60). Above all *Jesus makes known the nature of his own mission, which is to bear witness to the truth* (Cfr. *Io. 18, 37*), the truth expressed in the words: "The kingdom of God is at hand" (*Marc. 1, 14*). The Lord is teaching us that God is close to every aspect of our existence in society and in the world. His presence in our lives is most deeply experienced in *the life of grace and the exercise of moral responsibility*.

Jesus' injunction to "render to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's" is a specific application of the greatest of all the commandments: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself" (*Luc. 10, 27*). It is precisely when we recognize the *moral obligation to love our neighbour – all our neighbours, all our fellow citizens* – that we acknowledge and fulfil our duties to the State and to those responsible for public life. Furthermore, those who love God know that it is his will that they be active and responsible builders of a just and humane society.

5. *The Letter of Peter* helps us to apply Jesus' response in the Gospel to life in the political community: "Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution... *for it is God's will...* Live as free men, yet without using your freedom as a pretext for evil: but live as servants of God" (*1Petr. 2, 13-16*). For the believer all authority has its origin in God, and those who exercise it for the common good should be respected "for the sake of conscience" (Cfr. *Rom. 13, 1-7*). The words of Christ and the teaching of the New Testament are the basis of what the Catholic Church has always taught, namely, that political authority and the duties of citizens have to do with *the moral order*. As a nation, you have incorporated this truth into your own national ethos.

In a certain sense Indonesia's official attitude of respect for religion reflects the truth of Jesus' saving in today's Gospel. You seek to promote the well-being of your country according to the human values on which it is built – rendering to civil society what is its due. At the same time, all are encouraged to render to God what is his, recognizing that the right to practise one's religion takes its origin directly from the very dignity of the human person as a creature of God. This

understanding ensures peace and collaboration among the followers of different religious traditions and permits all to be actively involved in serving the common good.

*Maka saya menyerukan kepada seluruh Umat Katolik Indonesia: Jadilah putera bangsa dan warga negara Indonesia yang baik.*

6. *“Teacher, we know that you speak and teach rightly... you truly teach the way of God” (Luc. 20, 21).*

Today the Church in Jakarta and in all Indonesia, in union with the Bishop of Rome, renews this profession of faith in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We do so in imitation of *Mary who was blessed because she believed* (Cfr. *ibid.* 1, 45), and of Peter who spoke on behalf of the other Apostles to proclaim: “Lord, you have the words of eternal life!” (*Io.* 6, 86). We profess this faith in continuity with the men and women who have been the zealous witnesses of the Gospel in these islands.

This is a fitting moment for you, the present generation of Indonesian Catholics, to take up with renewed hope and vigour the *evangelical challenge which you have inherited from your forebears*. This is a fitting moment for all of you, especially the *Catholic laity* of Indonesia, to rededicate yourselves to the great tasks of transmitting the faith whole and entire to each new generation, of sustaining family life against all that weakens it, of serving the needs of your fellow citizens, especially the poor, the sick and suffering, those lacking education, and those who for any reason are left behind in the processes of growth and development.

And you, dear brother *bishops*, who are the teachers and pastors of the Church of Christ in Indonesia! It is you above all, together with your priests, who must lead the Church in Indonesia to her fullness in Christ. For this you have been invested with the episcopal ministry through the Holy Spirit whom Christ has given to the Church, that you may be able *to teach in truth the ways of God*. This is your vocation and your ministry. Christ who lives in his Church in every part of the world expects this service of you.

May the peace and love of him, who teaches the “way of God” – Jesus Christ, who is “the Way and the Truth and the Life” (*Io.* 14, 6) – be ever with the Church that is present on the islands of this splendid archipelago of Indonesia! May God abundantly bless the Indonesian people!

*Damai dan sejahtera menyertai kamu sekalian yang berada dalam Kristus (1Petr. 5, 4).*

Amen.

