



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO TANZANIA, BURUNDI,
RWANDA, AND THE IVORY COAST

EUCCHARISTIC CELEBRATION

HOMILY OF JOHN PAUL II

Kilimanjaro Stadium, Moshi (Tanzania)

Wednesday, 5 September 1990

"Habari Njema ya Wokovu imeujaza ulimwengu mwanga".
("The Good News of salvation has filled the world with light").

Ndugu zangu,
(*Dear Brothers and Sisters*),

1. This Eucharistic celebration is a great hymn of thanks giving for the gift of salvation which comes to us *from God through Jesus Christ*. Here in Moshi we give thanks to God that the Good News of salvation has come to this whole north-eastern part of Tanzania, to Chaggaland.

The Gospel of John tells us that "God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son" (*Jo. 3, 16*). *Salvation is the work of God's love*. It was precisely this love which *was revealed in Jesus Christ*, the only-begotten Son. In Him the promise of salvation became a reality through His Cross and Resurrection. This great mystery is proclaimed in the theme of this Liturgy: "The Good News of salvation has filled the world with light".

The saving light of Christ first shone on this region a hundred years ago. Ninafurahi sana kuwa nanyi katika sherehe ya Yubilei ya Miaka mia moja tangu Injili ilipohubiriwa jimboni Moshi. Ninapenda kumshukuru Askofu Amedeus Msarikie kwa maneno mazuri ya kunitambulisha. Ninamsalimu Askofu Mkuu wa Kanda hii Kardinali Laurean Rugambwa, ninawasalimu Maaskofu

wote waliopo hapa na ninyi nyote; mapadre, watawa na walei wa Jimbo la Moshi na Majimbo ya jirani na wengine kutoka Kenya na Zambia. Pia ninawasalimu kwa moyo wa upendo na heshima viongozi wote wa Manispaa, Chama na Serikali Mkoani, ambao mmejumuika pamoja nasi hapa leo.

(It is a great joy for me to be with you to celebrate the centenary of the evangelization of this part of Tanzania. I wish to thank Bishop Amedeus Msarikie for his kind words of welcome. I also greet your Metropolitan Archbishop, Cardinal Laurean Rugambwa, the other Bishops present, and all of you, priests, religious and laity from the Diocese of Moshi and the neighbouring dioceses and others from Kenya and Zambia. My cordial and respectful greeting also goes to the representatives of Regional and Municipal Governments and Party Leaders who have wished to honour us with their presence today).

It is fitting that together we give praise to God for the abundant fruits of past and present missionary activity, for the gift of salvation which has found a home in the hearts of the sons and daughters of this land.

2. When we witness what God has accomplished here, when we consider the wonderful gifts of grace that fill the life of your local Church, we must ask: *where have they come from?*

In today's Gospel Reading the Evangelist Matthew takes us *to Galilee, to the mountain* where the Risen Christ said to His Apostles: *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me"* (Matth. 28, 18). This is the same Christ whom earlier they had seen crucified and laid in the tomb. Now He is seen speaking in His glorified body, *in the glory of the Resurrection*, which is the source of His power "in heaven and on earth". This power is the power to command. It is the power to judge. But *above all it is the power to save*. By virtue of this power Christ *sends the Apostles* to all the nations of the world: "Go... make disciples... baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matth. 28, 19).

But that is not all. Our reading from the Acts of the Apostles casts further light on the *spread of the Gospel*. Before returning to the Father, and while at table with the Apostles, the Risen Christ said to them: *"not many days from now you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit"* (Act. 1, 5). We know that these words were fulfilled on Pentecost Day, when Christ's saving power was communicated to the Apostles and to the Church. Yesu alisema: *"Mtapokea nguvu, akiisha kuwajilia juu yenu Roho Mtakatifu; nanyi mtakuwa mashahidi wangu katika Yerusalemu, na katika Uyahudi wote, na Samaria na hata mwisho wa nchi!"* (Jesus said: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and then you will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judaea and Samaria, and indeed to the ends of the earth" (Ibid. 1, 8).

And in the light of history we may add: *"You will be my witnesses in Tanzania": Mtakuwa mashahidi wangu katika Tanzania*. Yes, in Tanzania too. The Gospel and the gift of salvation

arrived here, as they did everywhere - beginning from Jerusalem, Judaea and Samaria - *by means of witnesses to Christ who were strengthened by the Holy Spirit*. Today the Church in Moshi gives thanks for the light of the Gospel, for the Good News of salvation. Where have these gifts come from, if not from *that mountain in Galilee*? They have their source in the unique power of the Resurrection, the fullness of which belongs to Christ, the Redeemer of the world.

3. A century ago, the *Holy Spirit Fathers* Commenginer and Le Roy, under their Bishop, J. M. de Courmont, decided to build *a mission at Kilema*. It was from there that the Catholic Church spread to other areas in what is now the Diocese of Moshi, beginning with Kibosho in 1892 and Rombo-Mkuu in 1896. Like the first Apostles, these missionaries were moved by the Holy Spirit, after whom their missionary Institute was named. Their story, and the story of the other missionaries who followed them, is *a lesson in patience, perseverance and humility* in the face of many difficulties, dangers and trials. But it is also a story filled with the confidence and joy described by the Psalmist when he writes: "Those who are sowing in tears, carrying seed for the sowing, will sing when they reap, carrying their sheaves" (Cfr. *Ps.* 125 [124], 5-6).

You, dear brothers and sisters, are the joyful harvest of the missionaries' labours; you are a new creation of the Holy Spirit, who came upon the Apostles at Pentecost so that "the Good News of salvation" might "fill the world with light". And now, by the Providence which causes the Gospel to advance through time and space, *it is your turn to be Christ's witnesses* in the Diocese of Moshi, in Tanzania, on the Continent of Africa and "to the ends of the earth": *Sasa ni zamu yenu kuwa mashahidi wa Kristu* katika Tanzania, katika bara la Afrika "mpaka mwisho wa nchi".

4. "The Church on earth is missionary by her very nature" (*Ad Gentes*, 2) and *evangelization is her special grace, vocation and function* (Cfr. Pauli VI *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 14). Each of us, dear brothers and sisters, is called to preach the Gospel, "so that the Lord's message may spread quickly, and be received with honour among others as it was among you" (Cfr. *2 Thess.* 3, 1). The Bishops and their fellow workers in the priesthood have a special role to play in bringing *new disciples to Christ*, but men and women religious and all the laity must also be *on fire with the same zeal*. All are called to bear witness to the world's Redeemer in a way that is joyful, vibrant and strong (Cfr. *Ad Gentes*, 21).

In order for this to happen, *a truly "catholic" spirit* is needed which transcends all boundaries in its eagerness to bring Christ to those both near and far: *Kinachohitajika ni kuwa na moyo wa kikatoliki*, unaotutia bidii ya kueneza Ufalme wa Mungu popote duniani. Catholicity of this kind expresses itself in prayer for the needs of the universal Church, in material aid, the exchange of personnel, and cooperation in local, national and international works of evangelization. It is a sign of true love of the Church that, even though you have many needs of your own, *numerous priests and religious from Chaggaland are at work in other regions and countries*. In this way the Church in this region plays an effective part in Christ's mission: "You will be my witnesses... to the ends of the earth" (*Act.* 1, 8).

I wish to say a special word of encouragement to the *Religious Sisters* who are so numerous and perform such a vital service to the Church in Tanzania. Dear Sisters, the testimony of your consecrated life and of your works of love adds enormous vigour to the Christian community and stands as a blazing emblem of the heavenly kingdom (Cfr. *Perfectae Caritatis*, 1). Never lose courage and never cease to give thanks for the special and mysterious calling that is yours in the heart of the Church. May God bless each one of you, and increase your numbers for all that still remains to be done.

5. The same witness to the Risen Lord which the Apostles gave - and which lies at the heart of the two-thousand-year history of the "missions" in the Church - is the principal task facing the Church in Africa. A *Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops* will examine ways and means by which the Christians of the Continent can meet the challenge of evangelization as a new millennium approaches. The Bishops, priests, religious and lay people of the young Churches of Africa are today called to rely more and more on their youthful energies in order to make Christ more widely known, so that "the Good News of salvation will fill the world with light".

The Church knows from experience that the most enduring contribution that can be made to the spread of the faith is a *Christian life profoundly lived in everyday circumstances* (Cfr. *Ad Gentes*, 36). A local Church is effective as an instrument of evangelization *to the degree that it has truly made the Gospel its own*, "in a vital way, in depth and right to the very roots" (Pauli VI *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 20). For this witness to bear fruit, it must transmit in word and deed the *true message of the faith and of the moral life* which the first Christian generations wholeheartedly accepted. The many saints and martyrs of the young African Churches show that what has been handed on since Apostolic times need not be watered down in order to penetrate the rich soil of Africa. The heroic response to *the demands of conversion and the challenge of martyrdom* constitutes a glorious page in the history of your particular Churches.

At the same time, you are faced with the challenge of receiving and giving the Gospel message *in an authentically African way*. Each people, each tongue of the earth is called to confess and to express "in its own language" (Cfr. *Act. 2, 8*), the Gospel of salvation (Cfr. *Lineamenta* for the Special Assembly of the Synod of the Bishops for Africa, 47). Under the guidance of the Bishops and in full communion with the universal Church, the young Churches rightly "borrow" from the customs and traditions of their people, from their wisdom and their learning, from their arts and sciences, from all those things which make the truths of the faith more accessible, and which bring a deeper experience of grace and foster a proper ordering of Christian living (Cfr. *ibid.* 49; *Ad Gentes*, 22). By illuminating and purifying these elements of local life with the Gospel and bringing them into Catholic unity (Cfr. *Ad Gentes*, 22), the whole Church is marvellously enriched. May Mary the Mother of the Redeemer prepare the faithful of Africa for a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit, as her presence among the disciples prepared the first Pentecost in the Upper Room in Jerusalem.

6. My Pastoral Visit to Tanzania is coming to a close and I wish to thank all Tanzanians: Safari yangu ya kichungaji hapa Tanzania inafikia mwisho. Ninapenda kuwashukuru Watanzania wote. I have spent these days in your midst, constantly giving praise to Jesus Christ our Lord for the grace that is in you; for the joyful way you worship God and gather together in fellowship; for the vitality of your dioceses and parishes, of your associations and movements; for the promise that you offer towards the coming of Christ's kingdom in this land. Having been born from missionary activity, the Church in Tanzania is growing to maturity and is herself becoming missionary.

Is this not the greatest thanks that can be given to God for the gifts of the past century: that you who have so clearly received the Good News now bring it to others? *Go forth to meet the great challenge of evangelization*, trusting in the Lord's promise: "I am with you always; yes, to the end of time" (*Matth. 28, 20*).

Kristu yupo pamoja nanyi.

Injili iko pamoja nanyi.

Mwanga wa Wokovu uko pamoja nanyi.

Mungu awaimarishe katika imani na awabariki ili muwe mashahidi wa ukweli na upendo wake uletao wokovu, hadi watu wote wa Afrika watakapofurahi na kusema: "*Habari Njema ya Wokovu imeujaza ulimwengu mwanga*". Amina

(Christ is with you.

The Gospel is with you.

The light of salvation is with you. May God strengthen you in this conviction and bless you as you bear witness to the truth of his saving love, until all the peoples of Africa can rejoice and say: "The Good News of salvation has filled the world with light". Amen).