



# The Holy See

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APOSTOLIC PILGRIMAGE TO NIGERIA, BENIN

GABON AND EQUATORIAL GUINEA

***ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II  
TO THE REPRESENTATIVES  
OF THE PRESS, RADIO AND TELEVISION***

*Lagos (Nigeria)*

*Tuesday, 16 February 1982*

1. For the first time since last May the thirteenth, I am able to have direct contact with a group of representatives of the press, radio and television. And I am happy that it is a meeting with you who have been with me during my latest journey to Africa, the first I have made outside of Italy since the attempt on my life.

Many of you were in Rome last summer to inform your readers, viewers and listeners about the course of my recovery. I wish to thank you once more for the concern you demonstrated during that episode. I attribute its happy ending to the special protection of God and to the intercession of his Blessed Mother.

2. And now God's providence has arranged that in the space of less than two years I should make a second visit to the African continent. This meeting with you, particularly the journalists and the radio and television representatives of African countries, gives me an opportunity to reflect with you on the importance of the means of social communication in Africa today.

Here you are at the initial stages of the development of your mass media, while the more industrialized countries have already reached a high level of development in this sector. This situation increases your responsibility, while giving you a unique opportunity. Through your action, your professional honesty and your dedication to the cause of truth, you can make a decisive contribution to this continent. By orienting the mass media totally to the service of man and in favour of objective information, Africa can determine its own future development.

3. We know that today in this sector, as in others, there are dangerous imbalances, and that various international organizations have spoken out against them. There is a tendency towards the exercise of outside pressure in the world of

the press, radio and television, with the imposition, by the stronger countries, not only of technology but also of ideas. For this reason I feel it is important to stress that national sovereignty is safeguarded through the correct use of the communications media, precisely because these media can become instruments of ideological pressure. And this ideological pressure is more dangerous and insidious than many more obviously coercive means.

4. The Catholic Church will continue to call attention to the role of social communications. Since the Second Vatican Council she has multiplied her efforts in this sector. This year marks the tenth anniversary of the publication of the Pastoral Instruction "Communio et Progressio". In this document there are three words which stand out prominently: sincerity, honesty, and truth. If each of you succeeds in putting these principles into practice in your own sphere of competence, then the means of social communication will truly become for all humanity the means of social and cultural advancement – the means of true progress.

This is the hope that accompanies the expression of my gratitude for all the sacrifices and services you have so generously given during my pastoral pilgrimage to Nigeria, which is now drawing to a close.

May God bless you and your families and enable all of you to know his love and to experience his peace.

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