



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO KOREA, PAPUA NEW GUINEA,

SOLOMON ISLANDS AND THAILAND **WELCOME CEREMONY ADDRESS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II**

AT THE ARRIVAL IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA "Jackson's" Airport of Port Moresby (Papua New Guinea)

Monday, 7 May 1984

Your Excellency the Governor-General,

Mr Prime Minister,

Dear People of Papua New Guinea,

1. With great joy in my heart, I accept your *warm welcome* to Papua New Guinea. I am happy to have come to this young and vigorously developing nation, and I am grateful to God for the opportunity of spending these next days among the beloved people of this country.

As you know, this is not the first time that I have set foot on your land. Over ten years ago, when I was still Archbishop of Krakow, I already had the pleasure of being in your midst. I still remember well the beauty of the landscape and the warmth of your hospitality. I recall, too, the rich diversity of your citizens, how you are composed of many different tribes, each with its own history and traditions.

2. It is in friendship and brotherhood that I come to you today, desiring to strengthen *the respect and love that unites us*. But I come especially as chief Shepherd of the Catholic Church, to make a pastoral visit in this land.

For some time now, it has been a special desire of my heart to celebrate in Papua New Guinea the Centenary of the arrival of the first missionaries who came to you in obedience to Christ's command: "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...". The zealous efforts and personal sacrifices of those missionaries are well known throughout the world, as is the vitality and fervour of the Church here which they have helped to form. During the time of my pastoral visit, I shall have the joy of seeing and meeting this young and thriving Church. I shall be able to observe at first hand how its members are making important contributions to the well-being and development of your society. I hope to encourage and strengthen my brothers and sisters in the practice of the faith. I likewise look forward to meeting

many of my other Christian brethren, especially those of the Anglican Communion who are so numerous in this land. Upon all I invoke the grace and peace of Jesus Christ. With deep respect I also wish to greet all men and women of good will who long for peace and harmony in the world.

May God bless Papua New Guinea. May his peace descend on your beautiful islands, your great rivers, high mountains and deep valleys; may it rest on your volcanoes and fill your blue seas. And may *the love of Christ* abide in your hearts and your homes, today and for ever.

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