



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC PILGRIMAGE
OF HIS HOLINESS OF PAUL VI
TO WEST ASIA, OCEANIA AND AUSTRALIA

MASS AT THE AIRPORT OF COLOMBO

HOMILY OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI

Ceylon, Colombo
Friday, 4 December 1970

«Pacem relinquo vobis; pacem meam do vobis».

Let us thank God's fatherly Providence, and all the civil and religious leaders, whose graciousness towards Our person and eagerness to meet your own longings, have made it possible for Us to share together in this Eucharistic celebration, on Lanka's loved and holy soil.

On this happy occasion Our special message to your noble Nation is one of brotherhood. Yes, you are among yourselves brothers and sisters, children of one and the same Motherland-Lanka. Let that brotherhood knit you together as one family in your social, economic and political life, without any distinction of caste, creed, colour or tongue. Share one another's burdens, cares, sorrows and joys. Especially, share in an equitable manner the material resources of your country, so richly endowed by nature. These have been bestowed on you for the reasonable well-being of all, of each and every one. To realize this should be the concern not only of the State but of all its citizens. On this brotherly unity will depend your prosperity, your internal and external peace, your happiness. Our earnest wish and prayer for you is that God in his goodness may give you all these blessings.

We shall not be misunderstood-no one will take it amiss-if, in this highest and characteristic act of our religion, We turn now to you the fellow members of our Catholic Faith, to say how one we are-we who share this one Bread at the altar, we who in the Blood of the Lamb have been reconciled to the Father and among ourselves, and thus form not merely a single people of faith and prophecy, but the very family of Christian love.

You call us «Holy Father» - it is a pleasing and inspiring name. We hold it by representation, as Vicar of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and in his name. Our service to you and to the immense Catholic family is to bear that name without shirking its responsibilities, to live its deep significance by bearing its burdens and by faithfully fulfilling the duties it imposes.

Fortunately for Us in Our personal weakness and in view of the restrictions of time and place, others too share in that title; with Us they bear its responsibility, they discharge its exacting functions. They are your bishops and, the personal and sacramental prolongation of your bishops, your dear priests. We are happy to look round the altar tonight and greet with affection Our brother, Cardinal Thomas Cooray, your Archbishop, Our brethren in the episcopate and Our fellow-workers in the priesthood.

Along with them, tonight, from this altar, in fully shared responsibility of the pastoral office, We declare Ourselves one with you all, both Religious and laity, Our fellow members of Christ's Mystical Body.

A continual reminder of our oneness and the guarantee of our intimate communion with one another and with Christ Jesus-are these not found, according to Divine Providence, in a mother, Mary, the Immaculate Mother of Christ the Saviour? The name «Mother» is the ever appealing, ever new rallying cry of the members of a family. Mary is that heavenly Mother of this beloved Island.

To her, her Son's Vicar on earth, together with this family group of Lanka, wishes to recommend today the big problems of the world, and in particular asks her special protection on the Christian family. Our final word is «peace» - peace among you within the Catholic family. Through you may it spread from group to group in ever widening circles reaching out to the entire Island, so that Lanka may be a beacon of peace throughout Asia, in all the lands bounded by the Indian Ocean and throughout the World. Peace - Pax Christi - to all of you. This is the word We bring you in his name; this is the word We leave you with his blessing.