



The Holy See

JOURNEY TO UGANDA

ADDRESS OF PAUL VI TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN UGANDA

Friday, 1 August 1969

Venerable Brothers and beloved sons,

We thank you from Our heart for the magnificent welcome you have prepared for Us. We also congratulate you on the impressive vitality of Catholic life in Uganda, In only ninety years, vocations to the Priesthood and the Religious life have multiplied, and Catholicism has flourished to the extent that today nearly three million Ugandans, about a third of the total population of the country, are faithful sons of the Church. This Nation also gave the Church her first African Bishop of the modern era, Bishop Joseph Kiwanuka, named Vicar Apostolic of Mosaka on May the twenty-fifth, nineteen hundred .and thirty-nine.

When we contemplate so abundant a harvest, it is fitting to recall the sowers of the seed, the first Missionaries: and also those young Martyrs, glory of the Church in Uganda-Charles Lwanga and his companions, whom We recently raised to the honour of the altars in the universal Church. It is in their memory, and to consecrate their shrine, that the humble Vicar of Christ has come to Uganda, for they constitute a glory for the whole of Africa.

How admirable was the work of the pioneers of evangelization in this Country! The White Fathers, and, after them, the Mill Hill Fathers and the Sons of the Sacred Heart from Verona; the White Sisters; and all the other Men and Women Religious, whose only motive was to spread the Word of God. Their efforts have been so fruitful that, today, it is the Clergy of Uganda themselves who increasingly assume the responsibility of the Church here, with the assistance of the various missionary societies.

This abundant out-pouring of God's grace is so very evident today, that we must all dedicate ourselves to launch out into the deep, to continue and complete this vital mission. For "I am sure that He Who began a good work in- you will bring it to completion" (*Phil. 1, 6*).

To entourage you, Venerable Brothers and beloved sons, in this wider and more intense mission, We lovingly bestow upon you, and impart to your Clergy, your Religious, and all the families of Uganda, Our paternal Apostolic Blessing, expressing Our ardent hope that closer union and true peace among all the tribal, ethnic, and spiritual communities of this land many follow upon Our Benediction, as gracious gifts from Almighty God.