



The Holy See

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

***ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI
TO THE MEMBERS OF VARIOUS COMMUNITIES***

*Manila, Philippines
Sunday, 29 November 1970*

In spite of Our great desire, it was not possible for Us to accept the pressing invitation which your Cardinal extended to Us in your name. We do have, however, the pleasure of meeting here a delegation from your island, and it is with particular affection that we greet you. We thank Cardinal Rosales and all who made it possible for you to come here to Manila.

Tell your fellow-citizens that the Pope loves them, that he gives his blessing to the clergy, the religious, the laity - to all the families and to all the people of the island. The message We give you for them is the very one Jesus Christ gave to his apostles before he left them : «Love one another». That is the sign by which to tell the true disciples of the one who came to save all men of every race and language and country (Cfr. *Jo.* 13: 34-35).

With deep sentiments of fatherly affection in Our heart We bestow on you Our Apostolic Blessing.

On the occasion of Our passing through Manila We are greatly gratified to bless these new houses.

Our ministry is that of the Gospel. The aim of Our journey to Asia is therefore of the spiritual order: it is to proclaim the infinite riches of Christ, the hope that comes to us from his resurrection and which cannot be confounded (Cfr. *Eph.* 3). Our mission is to see to it that by his grace this seed of the Word should grow and multiply in hearts, that this hope should begin now to be realized in the

lives of men of today in the course of their pilgrimage on earth. We too must share with all, especially with those who are poor or in any way afflicted, their joys and hopes, their griefs and anxieties (*Gaudium et spes*, preface). This is the meaning of Our presence here.

We know the serious housing problem which affects so many thousands of families in your capital, as happens in the greater part of the large cities throughout the world. The growth of population and the flight from the land towards metropolitan centres complicate extremely the activity of those in charge. Besides, it seems to Us not to be enough to expect everything from the competence of the public authorities: it is a social problem of so broad a scope and of such deep seriousness that every conscience should be touched by it. Lack of housing or the absence of the minimum to make it livable is one of the chief causes of the degradation of family life and of the evil temptation to violence.

It is a world-wide problem, and a particularly crucial one in developing countries. If it is to be resolved, it calls for the readiness of all to give proof of imagination, social solidarity and generosity. That is why We extend Our warm felicitations to the individuals and organizations who have made the execution of this project possible; We publicly express the wish that their example may be followed for the greater well-being of all.

We pray Almighty God to bless them and their families, to bless the families about to occupy these dwellings and to comfort those who are waiting to have the joy of living in such conditions.

Dear brothers,

We greet you in the love of Christ as members and representatives of various Christian communions. Although your communities and the Catholic Church are not as yet linked in bonds of full unity, nevertheless we are brothers (Cfr. *Unitatis redintegratio*, 3). We share the faith which makes us subject to one Lord. We acknowledge one Baptism. The «written word of God, the life of grace, faith, hope and charity and many other gifts of the Holy Spirit» (*Ibid.*) are the common heritage bestowed on us by the Father because of the merits of the saving sacrifice of his beloved Son.

At this moment one cannot but think of the important calling of the peoples of the Philippine Islands. This land has a special vocation to be the city set on the hill, the lamp standing on high (Cfr. *Matth.* 5: 14-16) giving shining witness amid the ancient and noble cultures of Asia. Both as individuals and as a nation you are to show forth the light of Christ by the quality of your lives.

In the first place this calls for a living unity in charity and truth. Our Savior asked that for us of his Father when he prayed that his followers might be one, united by the very life of Father, Son and Holy Spirit «so that the world may believe it was you who sent me» (*Io.* 17: 21).

We are all painfully aware that this unity is not yet perfect among us. But we are heartened because our Lord has prayed for his followers «that they may become perfectly one» (*Io. 17: 23*).

And indeed it is in God's goodness that we have become aware again in these times of the very real bonds already existing between us. We have rediscovered what is common in our heritage and therefore now we are able to pray together. Now we are able to engage in dialogue and in study of theological problems.

Moreover, in a way that is particularly needed at this time, we can now pledge ourselves to work together to promote justice for all, in our own lands as well as among the family of nations. And you have many opportunities to do this here in the Philippine Islands.

There is the boundless desire of your young people to achieve a society in which honesty and integrity are paramount. There is the desire of Christians, both of the Catholic Church and of the communions to which you belong, to be the new leaven that will help purge out all corruption (Cfr. *1 Cor. 5: 7-8*) in particular that which proliferates when all the concern of men's hearts is set on power and wealth. And in this happy moment of encounter We would like to stress what We have already said: «We are sure that all Christians, our brethren, will wish to expand their common cooperative effort in order to help mankind vanquish selfishness, pride and rivalries, to overcome ambitions and injustices, to open up to all the road to a more human life, where each man will be loved and helped as his brother, as his neighbor» (*Populorum progressio*, 82).

This is the direction to which the Catholic Church is committed. The task of assisting the whole development of human beings is to be served by Catholics working together with their fellow Christians, and indeed with all men of good will.

As you thus proclaim the Good News of Christ by the quality of your lives and by the integrity of your social order, may it also become increasingly possible for you and for the sons of the Catholic Church «to make together before the nations a common profession of faith in God and in Jesus Christ» (*Ad gentes*, 15).

Dear friends, We thank you for the gracious courtesy of your visit to us and We pray that Our presence with you at this time may serve the cause of «him whose name unites us» (*Ibid.*).

We were pleased to know that Jewish people in the Philippines expressed joy and expectation when they learned about Our desire to visit this country. Now that We have come, We wish them to know that Our heart responds to theirs with joy. We hope that the feeling of expectation will be replaced with one of spiritual fulfilment, both in their hearts and in ours, as they and We together recall on this occasion what the Second Vatican Council called «the spiritual bond linking the people of the New Covenant with Abraham's stock» (*Nostra aetate*, 4).

We are grateful for the gift of these specially inscribed copies of the Gospel of Mark presented to us by the Philippine Bible Society, a member of that worldwide organization, the United Bible Societies, with which the Catholic Church now shares many fruitful cooperative programs.

We know that, with the approval of the bishops, there are interconfessional translations of the Bible in five of the languages of this country, made in accordance with the guidelines approved by Us and by the authorities of the United Bible Societies.

It is a pleasure to have in Our hands today the firstfruits of that work in the Philippines, the Gospel of Mark in Tagalog and Ilocano.

We fervently hope that deeper acquaintance with Christ through the word of God will bring about better and ever more widespread witness to Christ in the Philippines.

Your desire that We should also speak to you who represent all the religions practised in this beautiful archipelago coincided with our own desire. It is with joy that We have found the occasion for this meeting.

Placed as We are at the head of a Church that is called Catholic and experiences catholicity - that is to say, universality - Our thoughts and Our concern cannot be halted by any barrier of place, people or religion; they extend to all men. With all the more reason We feel Ourselves close to those who have in common with Us the momentous search for the divine and a trusting submission to the laws of heaven, those who look to religion for answers to the great problems which confront and torment mankind and who also find therein their strength and their hope.

You are certainly aware that in these days the Church has wished to open herself still more to fraternal contact with all peoples of all civilizations and all religions. She respects and admires the treasures bestowed on all people, and she invites them to join with her wherever collaboration is possible for a more perfect and universal reign of justice and peace, and for the eradication of the great misfortunes or miseries afflicting so many millions of our brothers. It is always a joy to find such unitedness as is the case in your country. We pray God to preserve it and increase it, for his honour and service, and for your welfare and that of the whole world.

Dear friends,

There would be something missing during Our visit to Manila if We did not have a moment to say a word to the representatives of the press - to those to whom goes the merit of publicizing Our journey by means of the marvels of mass media.

These marvels have today attained a rare degree of perfection. The registering of events and their transmission are absolutely prodigious. It seems to Us that this is accompanied by a notable increase of fatigue on the part of those who are involved in this difficult mission.

We appreciate the fact that you must be constantly attentive, that you must concentrate on making summaries which are at the same time rapid and exact. Often the external conditions under which you work are unfavourable. Besides all this there is the necessary work involved in completing your articles and stories. Be assured that We are conscious of how trying your work can be. We acknowledge its great merit and the debt of gratitude due to you from those who benefit from your labours.

We are Ourselves one of those beneficiaries and We are pleased to state Our thankfulness and to give public expression to it in this Our meeting.

Your activity is a difficult one - as We have said - but let Us now add that it is an exalted one. You know that the greatness of a mission is measured in relation to the ideal which it serves and by the quality of the services that it renders. The ideal which you are serving is the truth itself. You must yourselves reflect this truth: it is up to you to accept it and to transmit it to others. And may this challenge, dear friends, never leave you.

Never disfigure the truth: never deceive those who read your reporting and look to you with confidence. How great is the good that journalists can do just by the way in which they present the news. What a difference there is between objective presentation and tendentious presentation. Your conscience judges this, and We pray that it may always be upright and intent on serving truth. We repeat with deep conviction: your mission is a great one: only you can do it. The World depends on you.

As We conclude, We would make one last remark. For those of you who are making an extensive following of Our trip, necessitating your absence from home, We express Our appreciation also for the sacrifice and the inconvenience. When you return home, We would request you to convey Our greetings to your families.

Upon all of you We invoke in abundance the blessings of God.