



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO TANZANIA, BURUNDI,
RWANDA, AND THE IVORY COAST

CONFERRAL OF THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION
TO THE YOUTH OF TANZANIA

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

*Ruhuwiko Grounds, Songea
Monday, 3 September 1990*

Yesu asema: "Nami nitamwomba Baba, naye atawapa Mfariji mwingine, ili akae nanyi hata milele; ndiye Roho wa kweli".

(Jesus says: "I shall ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate to be with you for ever, the Spirit of truth" (Jo. 14, 16-17).

Ndugu zangu katika Kristu,
(Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ),

1. Jesus said these words in the Upper Room just before His Passion and Death on the Cross. He addressed them directly to the Apostles: He promised them that after leaving this world He would send them "another Advocate—the Spirit of truth". *Jesus Himself had to go away*: after the Resurrection He would return to the Father. But *the Holy Spirit would come; the Paraclete would come down upon the Apostles*, visibly, on the day of Pentecost, in the same Upper Room in Jerusalem. The Spirit of truth would enable the Apostles to become witnesses to the truth, heralds of Jesus Christ to the world. Thus Pentecost represents the beginning of the spread of the Gospel. And as the Gospel was preached to the ends of the earth, so the Church spread to every part of the world: to Africa, to Tanzania, to Songea.

In the Holy Spirit, the Lord was with the Apostles after His Ascension into Heaven and is with the

Church "for ever", until the end of time. *Today, here in Songea*, this great assembly bears witness to the continuing presence of that Spirit of truth: "you know Him, because He is with you, and He is in you" (Jo. 14, 17).

2. Ninapenda kuwashukuru nyote kwa makaribisho mazuri. Ninamshukuru Askofu Mkuu Yakobo Komba kwa maneno yake ya kunitambulisha kwenu. Ninawasalimu ndugu zangu Maaskofu waliopo hapa, mapadre wote, wamisionari, watawa, makatekista na wakristu wote kutoka majimbo ya Iringa, Lindi, Mbeya, Mbinga, Mtwara, Njombe na Tunduru-Masasi.

(Rejoicing in this fact. I wish to thank you all for the warmth of your welcome here today. I thank Archbishop James Komba for his kind words of introduction. I greet all my brother Bishops gathered here, all the priests, the missionaries, the men and women religious, the catechists and all the members of the Church in Songea and the Dioceses of Iringa, Lindi, Mbeya, Mbinga, Mtwara, Njombe and Tunduru-Masasi).

To the whole Eucharistic assembly I repeat the words of the first Reading: "May the peace of Christ reign in your hearts, because it was for this that you were called together" (Col. 3, 15).

In the fellowship of Christ I *greet the representatives of the other Christian communities* in Tanzania: Ninawasalimu *wawakilishi wa Jumuiya Nyingine za kikristu* hapa Tanzania. May there always be mutual esteem and effective cooperation among all who profess the name of Jesus, our Lord and Saviour. To *the followers of the Islamic faith* I extend the hand of friendship and love: Ninawasalimu *wafuasi wa dini ya kiislamu*. As believers in one, merciful God it is essential that we develop a relationship of justice, brotherhood and mutual respect. I also greet *the followers of traditional and other religions* and thank them for their presence in this Assembly: Ninawasalimu pia *wafuasi wa dini nyingine*.

My appreciation also goes to the *civil authorities* who have wished to share in the special joy of the Catholic community: Ninawashukuru *viongozi wa Serikali*. I thank you for all that you have done to prepare this celebration. May God assist you in serving the needs of your fellow citizens and in leading your country along the path of genuine development and peace!

3. *Hii ni fursa ya pekee kwangu kukutana na vijana wa Tanzania ambao ninawasalimu kwa upendo katika Bwana Yesu.*

(This is my special meeting with the young people of Tanzania, whom I greet with affection in our Lord Jesus).

The words of promise which the Lord Jesus made to the Apostles are also addressed to *you* young Christians, who make up such a large part of this gathering. This is also a special moment of grace for me, the Bishop of Rome and Successor of Peter. The Father of mercies gives me the opportunity to communicate a unique gift to this community: *the gift of the Holy Spirit through the*

Sacrament of Confirmation, which many young men and women are to receive during this ceremony.

In keeping with the Apostolic tradition, I will confirm you with the Holy Spirit. In doing so I wish to reflect with you, and with all young Catholic Tanzanians, on *your vocation and mission in the Church and in society*: Ninapenda kutafakari pamoja nanyi wito na utume wenu katika Kanisa na katika jamii. Through Baptism you have already received the Holy Spirit. Through Confirmation you will be strengthened by the same Spirit for a more responsible and public profession of faith in Jesus Christ.

4. Vijana wapendwa, Sakramenti ya Kipaimara itaimarisha kujitoa kwenu kwa Kristu na itawafanya muwe mashahidi wake ulimwenguni. (*Dear young people, the Sacrament of Confirmation "confirms" your commitment to Christ and makes you his witnesses to the world*).

In the anointing with chrism you will be *sealed with the Holy Spirit*, to strengthen and bring to maturity the Christian life which you already received in Baptism and which you have been living through faith, in and through the Church. You commit yourselves to greater decision and responsibility in living as Christians, in following the Gospel message. On your part, this Sacrament involves a *new degree of accountability for the faith* that you received at Baptism; on God's part, it implies an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, an infusion of grace, a particular help in reaching a more mature way of living your faith.

The "new life" which you received at Baptism now becomes "yours" in a much more vital and personal way. Christ now counts on you to be his witnesses, especially to your own generation, to the youth of Africa. He sends you out to be builders of his kingdom of justice, peace and love among your brothers and sisters. He strengthens you to take your rightful place in the Church's mission of bringing the Gospel message of truth and life to every corner of society.

5. Today's Reading from the Letter to the Galatians clearly indicates the great demand that Christ makes on his followers:

"Mkienenda katika Roho hamtazitimiza kamwe tamaa za mwili. Kwa sababu *tamaa za mwili hupingana na Roho*" (Gal. 5, 16).

(*"If you are guided by the Spirit you will be in no danger of yielding to self-indulgence, since self-indulgence is the opposite of the Spirit"*).

Certainly it is not easy for people, especially young people, to be selfgiving and generous when they see around them so much poverty and suffering, so many instances of neglect and injustice.

On attaining independence, many developing countries looked with *optimism* to the future only to find that their *hopes for development* today appear very far from being realized (Cfr. Ioannis Pauli

PP. II *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 12). The failure of development is evident in continuing hunger and malnutrition, in the plight of refugees, in exposure to disease and the lack of even basic health care. It can also be seen in the scarcity of educational facilities, of decent living conditions, of productive employment; in unfair competition for positions, in the crime, corruption and unscrupulous ambition present at many levels of social life. How many young people in Africa are deeply affected by the lack of hope that overshadows their future!

6. In many ways the world, in its human and spiritual dimensions, mirrors the *original chaos* mentioned in the very first words of the Book of Genesis: the world was "a formless void, (and) there was darkness over the deep" (*Gen.* 1, 2). That biblical image is a good representation of the real difficulties and the frustrations that accompany the daily life of millions of our brothers and sisters. But the Book of Genesis continues: "God's spirit hovered over the water" (*Ibid*). *The final word is not one of suffering and hopelessness, but of love and victory over sin.*

The shape of the future facing many young Africans can look discouraging, but it need not be so. Many problems of development, no matter how overpowering, can be solved if there is a new attitude, diametrically opposed to a selfish desire for profit and the thirst for power (Cfr. Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 38). What is needed on the part of people and nations, developed and developing, is a *commitment to solidarity*, directed to the good of all.

The change of attitude which the world so urgently needs is not brought about by ideological tensions or social conflicts. Rather it is the result of people's *conversion from self-indulgence to love*: *Kinachohitajika ni uongofu, yaani kufarakana na tamaa za mwili na kushikamana na upendo.* The love we are speaking about includes a profound respect for the dignity of every person, without discrimination of any kind, and effective service of others. Young friends: look around you - at your parents, at your priests, at the Religious Sisters and Brothers - and you will see many *shining examples of evangelical love*. In the Christian view, only an outpouring of the Holy Spirit is strong enough to bring about a "civilization of love". That is why the Sacrament of Confirmation is so relevant to the real problems of life. That is why you who are being sealed with the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Confirmation have so much to share with others.

"Tunda la Roho ni... upendo, furaha, amani, uvumilivu, utu wema, fadhili, uaminifu, upole, kiasi... Na hao walio na Kristu Yesu wameusulibisha mwili pamoja na mawazo yake mabaya na tamaa zake" (*Gal.* 5, 22. 24).

Je, vijana wa Tanzania mko tayari kuwa na uongofu wa namna hiyo?

Je, wakristu wote wa Tanzania mko tayari kushirikiana na Kristu na kwa ajili ya Kristu kuijenga nchi yenu na bara lenu katika ukweli, haki na upendo?

"Tukiishi kwa Roho, na tuenende kwa Roho" (*Ibid.* 5, 25).

("What the Spirit brings is... love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and selfcontrol... You cannot belong to Christ Jesus unless you crucify all self-

indulgent passions and desires").

(Are the young people of Tanzania ready for this change of heart?).

(Are all the Christians of this land ready to work with Christ and for Christ in building up your country and your continent in truth, justice and love?).

("Since the Spirit is our life, let us be directed by the Spirit"!).

7. In today's Liturgy we have repeated several times the words from the psalm: *"I will tell of your name to my brethren and praise you where they are assembled"* (Ps. 21, 23).

These words speak of your mission in the Church. Through Confirmation, Christ is calling you to be like the Apostles: *His witnesses before the community and before the world*. What is necessary is that you love Him and keep His commandments (Cfr. *Io*. 14, 15). Then you will live in the truth, and the truth will expose the workings of evil and the underlying sources of evil. Gradually, as you work together, you will succeed in transforming the world around you, making it more human, more fraternal, more of God!

The Holy Spirit will lead you to show forth the *intrinsic truth of the Gospel message*, a message which is never opposed to genuine human development, but rather is the message which enlightens and sustains the human family's pilgrimage on earth.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, in your liturgical celebration of the Sacraments, in your family prayer, in all that you do and say, bear courageous witness to Jesus Christ, to Christ crucified and risen, to the One who is meek and humble of heart, to the One who has overcome the world, to the One who was, who is and is to come.

Ushuhuda wa kazi zenu na uendelee ili kila kizazi hapa Tanzania na Africa nzima kipate kufikiwa na Habari Njema ya Wokovu katika Bwana na Mkombozi wetu Yesu Kristu. Je, vijana wa Tanzania mko tayari kuma na uongofu wa na namna hiyo?

(May the testimony of your good works never fail, so that each new generation in Tanzania and throughout Africa will hear the joyful Good News of salvation in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Are the young people of Tanzania ready for this change of heart? Amen).