



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY
OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO CAMEROON, SOUTH AFRICA AND KENYA

FAREWELL CEREMONY

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

*Johannesburg International Airport (South Africa)
Monday, 18 September 1995*

1. My brief visit to South Africa is at an end, and I must go on to proclaim the message of the *Special Session for Africa of the Synod of Bishops* to the Church in another part of this beloved Continent. With gratitude to God I thank all South Africans for the warm hospitality I have received in these days. In my prayers I will remember you all, especially the young, the sick, the needy, and all who still suffer for the sake of justice and freedom.

I extend a special word of thanks to President Mandela and the civil authorities who have made this visit possible and have been present at the various events. I thank the public officials and the many volunteers who have helped in every way. My gratitude also goes to the members of the press, radio and television who have broadcast the event to other parts of Africa and around the world.

2. To the Catholic Bishops and faithful I extend my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation. We have prayed together and celebrated the mysteries of our faith. We have invoked God's blessings and protection on the Church and on society. I take with me the sights and sounds of your joyful reception of the results of the African Synod. I am encouraged by your generous commitment to implementing its decisions and orientations, as the whole Church prepares to enter the Third Christian Millennium, ever more conformed to her Crucified and Risen Lord.

I assure our fellow–Christians and the followers of other religious traditions that in responding to the aspirations of the peoples of this Continent for authentic dignity, freedom and peace, the Catholic community feels the need to intensify ecumenical co–operation and interreligious dialogue. Along the path of mutual esteem and friendship we can work together for the common good. Divided, we can only delay the coming of true justice and peace.

3. The recent history of South Africa shows that peace is *the victory of the human spirit* which determines to set aside the ways of division and conflict in order to follow the path of forgiveness and brotherhood. A nation making a new beginning, in the midst of difficulties of all kinds, needs everyone’s co–operation and solidarity. Peace calls for a courage much greater than the senseless temerity which would go on using the old ways of violence. While it is important that the truth about past wrongs be known and responsibility be laid where it is due, it is most important that the budding plant of a just and harmonious multiracial society be cared for and allowed to grow. The whole of Africa, indeed the whole world, follows each step you take, knowing that every achievement along the path to a society that is more just, more humane, more worthy of its citizens, is *a victory for everyone, for it bears the hope and inspiration of similar success elsewhere.*

God bless all those who work for justice and harmony, without discrimination, among the peoples and nations of Africa! May the Almighty pour out his peace into the hearts of all South Africans!

Farewell! And God bless you all!