



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

*Jomo Kenyatta International Airport of Nairobi (Kenya)
Wednesday, 20 September 1995*

*Dear Mr President,
Your Eminence, Your Excellencies,
Dear Kenyan Friends,*

1. Wakati wa kusema Kwa heri Umefika. Ziara yangu imemalizika haraka sana. Nimefurahia tena kuwepo hapa Chini Kenya. Nawashukuruni nyote kwa ukarimu wenu na upendo mlionionyesha wakati wote niliokuwepo nanyi.

(It is already time to say farewell. My visit has come to an end, all too quickly. I have greatly enjoyed being in Kenya again. I am grateful to everyone for the kindness and interest that have accompanied me at every moment).

I thank you, Mr President, and the Members of the Government, the civil and military authorities, and all who have contributed to the smooth running of this visit; as well as all the representatives of the press, radio and television, who have followed the events of these days.

I am especially grateful to Cardinal Otunga and to Archbishop Okoth, President of the Episcopal Conference, and all the Bishops, as well as the priests, religious and laity who have taken part so joyously in the Mass and Synodal Session, or followed them in spirit from afar. I leave the Catholic

community of Eastern Africa with the assurance of my warm affection in our Lord Jesus Christ.

A word of thanks also goes to the representatives of the other Christian Churches and Ecclesial Communities who have wished to take part in these celebrations. It is encouraging to witness the trust and friendship which mark ecumenical relations among Kenyan Christians. May the Holy Spirit lead you along this path to ever greater understanding and mutual support.

I pray too that Christians and Muslims will continue to build bonds of mutual knowledge and respect, so that all believers in the Almighty will work together for the good of society as a whole.

To all the followers of Traditional African Religion, I likewise express my appreciation and esteem.

2. This is the conclusion of my entire journey, which has taken me from Cameroon to South Africa, and to Kenya. These have been *three stages of a pilgrimage in spirit to all the peoples of Africa*. And what reflection do I make at the end of this pilgrimage? I see a Continent eager to rise to a new level of life and dignity. I see a profound process of change taking place: people questioning, seeking the reasons for the slowness of development, and daring to explore new ways to meet the challenges inherent in the changing political and economic world situation. In an increasingly interdependent world, Africans know that they must seize the opportunity to advance not only materially, but above all on the path of respect for human rights and authentic democratic freedom. The peoples of Africa wish to give themselves the chance of a better future. They cannot let themselves down, and they must not be let down by others.

3. From the heart of Africa a cry goes out to those who are in a position to help. The so-called South of the world urges the North not to weaken its resolve to tackle the question of poverty, of refugees, of economic and cultural underdevelopment. The continuing gap between rich and poor regions of the world is a serious threat to global stability. *The moral imperative of solidarity* is fundamentally linked to human nature itself and to the absolute need which human beings have of one another. At the level of nations and continents, this need must be met, or living together in harmony becomes impossible. The poor do not envy the rich their progress! They ask them to acknowledge the responsibilities which flow from their situation of privilege and to meet the ethical demands of the universal destination of the world's resources. The cry that goes out to the richer nations from the peoples of Africa is for aid, co-operation and solidarity which effectively respect people as people, poor or rich, powerless or powerful, *all united in the one human family and in the same human dignity*.

No one must be discouraged at the enormity of the demands of a progress that is truly worthy of man. The very scale and importance of the enterprise should already be a source of inspiration and encouragement to Africa's sons and daughters.

4. Every day I pray for Africa's peoples. The Almighty, the Lord of history, gives men and women

of good will the strength to go forward perseveringly and to follow through courageously in the work of development and peace. He is the guarantee that we do not hope in vain.

Dear Friends, Kenya occupies a central place in the promise that is Africa. It has the resources *to work against the obstacles* that stand in the way of progress, and *to work for a society of justice and harmony*. All Kenyans must be able to feel proud of their country. All must be able to play a part in building her future. This is the wish I express for you all. This is the prayer I make to Almighty God for the marvellous Kenyan people.

Mungu wa Amani aw nanyi nyote. Mungu Ibariki Kenya. Mungu Ibariki Afrika.

(May the God of peace be close to you all!

God bless Kenya! God bless Africa!)