



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE BISHOPS OF INDONESIA
ON THEIR « AD LIMINA » VISIT**

Monday, 3 June 1996

Dear Brother Bishops,

1. With fraternal love I welcome you - the *Bishops from Indonesia* on your *ad limina* visit - making my own this prayer of the Apostle Paul: "May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a spirit of wisdom, that you may know what is the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe!" (Cfr. *Eph.* 1, 17-19). May the Triune God ever more strengthen in us the "spirit of power" (2 *Tim.* 1, 7) which we have received through our Episcopal consecration! Your pilgrimage to the tombs of the holy Apostles who offered in Rome the supreme witness of shedding their blood for Christ links your particular Churches to the See of Peter with *ties of affection and loyalty*. Through you I greet the whole Church in your vast Archipelago, of which I have such treasured memories from my Pastoral Visit in 1989. I give thanks to almighty God for your faithfulness to the Gospel, your longing for holiness, and your vigour in evangelizing.

When the Holy Spirit came down upon the Apostles in the Upper Room, he gave them the power to carry out their mission of bringing the Good News "to the end of the earth" (*Act.* 1, 8). From the outset they accomplished this task in the "unity of the Spirit" (*Eph.* 4, 3), in *a communion of grace more profound than the bonds of family, race or language*. This same Spirit has been bestowed in a special way upon all those who have received the fullness of the Apostolic Ministry. The service of God's People is to be carried out in a *spirit of collegiality* - modelled on the "one heart" and "one mind" of the first community (Cfr. *Act.* 4, 32). Your communion must be a sign to all of how to plan wisely and work together in mutual respect, for the building up of the Body of Christ.

Within the Episcopal College each of you bears personal responsibility for the particular Church over which you preside in love. At the same time fraternal bonds which unite you to one another expand your horizon to embrace the welfare of other particular Churches. In this *koinonia* no community can isolate itself. Your *spirit of willing co-operation* bears witness before your people to the marvellous unity in the richness of diversity created by the Spirit (Cfr. *1Cor.* 12, 4-6).

2. The Church in Indonesia is still a "little flock" (*Luc.* 12, 32). For that very reason it is particularly precious in the Lord's sight. The demands of the episcopal ministry are weighty, but those who bear this burden are comforted by the Lord's words that he has chosen us as his "friends" (Cfr. *Io.* 15, 15). Even more, he has promised *to use our weakness*, "lest the Cross of Christ be emptied of its power" (*1Cor.* 1, 17). In all our human designs and programmes we must not lose sight of the fact that Christ Jesus draws us to himself when he is lifted up from the earth (Cfr. *Io.* 12, 32). It is the "folly" and "scandal" of the Cross which reveal the power and wisdom of God (Cfr. *1Cor.* 1, 21-24).

The fears which people harbour and which impede their coming to full human and spiritual stature (Cfr. *Eph.* 4, 13) have their antidote in the grace that flows from the pierced side of the Saviour (Cfr. *Io.* 19, 34). No matter how heavy the burdens of our ministry, we must trust in *God's providential care for his creation*, "which will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God" (*Rom.* 8, 21). Let us not be afraid, for it is the Risen Lord himself who is with us! (Cfr. *Matth.* 28, 20)

In this first meeting with the members of your Conference I wish to speak to you about your pastoral charge to be "stewards of the grace of the supreme priesthood" (Cfr. *Lumen Gentium*, 26) and to ensure that the word of God is faithfully taught to God's people (Cfr. Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Veritatis Splendor*, 116).

3. Since you are above all the *spiritual* guides of your flocks I especially urge you to develop a truly "contemplative outlook" (Cfr. Eiusdem *Evangelium Vitae*, 83). Such an outlook is nourished by prayer and the sacramental life and it strives to penetrate life's deepest meaning. This spirit is in harmony with the cultural and religious experience of the peoples of Asia. Your Continent's ancient spiritual traditions challenge the whole Church to focus on what is *absolutely primary for the faith*: to share in the very life of the Eternal One as his beloved children (Cfr. *1 Io.* 3, 1). May the Church in Indonesia become ever more a communion of contemplation and prayer in which the Blessed Trinity dwells (Cfr. *Io.* 14, 23).

The safeguarding and promotion of the *integrity, beauty and ordered celebration of the Sacraments* is the way to refresh the faithful with the "living water" flowing from the Heart of Christ (Cfr. *Io.* 7, 38). It is for you to encourage active and devout participation in the Eucharist, frequent reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation - especially by preaching its necessity and assuring its ready availability - a comprehensive catechesis for the reception of the Sacraments of Initiation,

and a thorough programme of marriage preparation, which must be especially intense for those planning an inter-faith wedding.

4. The inculturation of the Liturgy is a matter which also deserves close pastoral attention. Duly regulated liturgical adaptations - which respect the substantial unity of the Roman Rite - are a significant dimension of the *full immersion of the Gospel in the life of each people and its culture*. This process is the fruit of a progressive maturing in faith. Thus it is a complex undertaking, "a slow journey" (Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Redemptoris Missio*, 52), one calling for careful discernment. I encourage your efforts to bring the liberating power of the Good News to the heart of the rich cultural mosaic of the Archipelago. Inculturation involves more than a simple adaptation of traditional customs or current trends. It is a process rooted in a genuine exchange between people of proven faith and their culture. Dear Brothers, it is for you to *inspire, guide and judge the delicate process of inculturation* which enhances the catholicity of Christ's Body.

5. Moreover, as Bishops, you are called to "bear witness to the truth" (*Io.* 18, 37), ensuring that your people come to know the truth which sets them free (Cfr. *1 Tim.* 2, 4; *Io.* 8, 32). The safeguarding of the doctrinal integrity of catechesis and the promotion of genuine Catholic education are responsibilities of those entrusted with the faithful preservation of the deposit of faith. The working out of the implications of the Gospel for Christian life in the world, as well as its applications to new situations, are also essential components of caring for the apostolic preaching. One effective way for Bishops to share with their flocks "the unsearchable riches of Christ" is through the individual and joint publication of Pastoral Letters. Courageous, forthright and persuasive teaching fosters in the People God knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord (Cfr. *Phil.* 3, 8).

From your pastoral experience you know that formation in the faith takes place in various ways: in parishes, associations and communities with specific needs. Above all I encourage your efforts to assist parents in handing on the faith to their children (Cfr. Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Familiaris Consortio*, 52). Do all you can to foster the *theological and spiritual formation of the laity*, directing the efforts of all involved to the true purpose of all catechesis: the "fullness life" in Christ (Cfr. *Io.* 10, 10), an interiorization of the gifts of the Spirit.

6. The Church in Indonesia is rightly proud the contribution made by Catholic schools to the spiritual and temporal well-being of individuals and society itself. It is my fervent hope that, in a society that is undergoing rapid transformation, you will continue to support this educational mission by ensuring that it is rooted in the values of the Gospel. Whenever education is restricted to learning scientific and technological skills it fails to meet the noble objective which the Church sets for it: the integral development of the human person and the creation of a just and peaceful social order (Cfr. *Gravissimum Educationis*, 8). I urge you to continue along the path you have so wisely chosen: *strengthen the Catholic identity of your schools*, clarifying their specific mission and fostering the pastoral care of students and teachers in the educational institutions under your care.

Also deserving of your encouragement are the programmes of solidarity which are becoming more common, whereby schools with more resources share them with those which have less.

7. Indonesia as a nation has been blessed by a history of tolerance and religious freedom, a situation dependent upon respect for *Pancasila* as the noble expression of its traditional wisdom. The deepest motivation for interreligious harmony comes from the interior message of religion: the search for God and respect for others. The Church teaches that *any form of religious intolerance and proselytism compromises the fundamental right to freedom religion*. In your Dioceses, therefore, interreligious dialogue should be "part of the Church's evangelizing mission" (Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Redemptoris Missio*, 55). Interreligious co-operation begins with the *dialogue of life*, which fosters reciprocal knowledge and respect. This in turn leads to the dialogue of action, which promotes solidarity in the cultural, economic and social fields. Practical co-operation creates mutual esteem among all believers in God and stimulates the desire to learn from others and to work with them.

As "authentic teachers of the faith" (*Christus Dominus*, 2), Bishops have a special role in overseeing the theological dimension of interreligious dialogue. In particular, they must not lose sight of *the universality and uniqueness of Redemption in Christ*: the only beloved Son of the Father is "the Saviour of all, the only one able to reveal God and lead to God" (Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Redemptoris Missio*, 5). Fruitful interreligious dialogue depends on a spirit of fraternal charity, of respect for the demands of conscience on both sides, and a profound love for the truth. The situation of Indonesia calls you to special efforts to ensure that the *dialogue between Christianity and Islam* will lead to closer ties among believers in the One and Merciful God.

8. Dear Brothers, you are now in the midst preparations for the *Asian Synod*, that great assembly which will guide the pilgrimage of your Churches into the Third Christian Millennium. The Synod promises to be a significant milestone for the whole Church in Asia. Your visit *ad limina* is likewise part of your preparation for the Jubilee of the Year 2000. May the Holy Spirit enable the People of God in your country to celebrate the Great Jubilee "by renewing their hope in the definitive coming of the Kingdom of God, preparing for it daily in their hearts, [and] in the Christian community to which they belong" (Eiusdem *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, 46). I invite you to instil in those whom you serve an earnest *desire for conversion and a longing for communion* with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Cfr. 1 Io. 1, 3). Entrusting you and all the priests, religious and lay faithful of your particular Churches to the intercession of Mary, whose maternal mediation guides your path to the Heart of her Son, I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing.

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