



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY
OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 6th ASIAN YOUTH DAY
(13-18 AUGUST 2014)

MEETING WITH THE AUTHORITIES

ADDRESS OF POPE FRANCIS *Chungmu Hall at the "Blue House" (Seoul)*
Thursday, 14 August 2014

Video

Madam President,
Honorable Government and Authorities,
Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Dear Friends,

It is a great joy for me to come to Korea, the land of the morning calm, and to experience not only the natural beauty of this country, but above all the beauty of its people and its rich history and culture. This national legacy has been tested through the years by violence, persecution and war. But despite these trials, the heat of the day and the dark of the night have always given way to the morning calm, that is, to an undiminished hope for justice, peace and unity. What a gift hope is! We cannot become discouraged in our pursuit of these goals which are for the good not only of the Korean people, but of the entire region and the whole world.

I wish to thank President Park Geun-hye for her warm welcome. I greet her and the distinguished members of the government. I would like to acknowledge also the members of the diplomatic corps, and all those present who by their many efforts have assisted in preparing for my visit. I am most grateful for your hospitality, which has immediately made me feel at home among you.

My visit to Korea is occasioned by the Sixth Asian Youth Day, which brings together young Catholics from throughout this vast continent in a joyful celebration of their common faith. In the course of my visit I will also beatify a number of Koreans who died as martyrs for the Christian faith: Paul Yun Ji-chung and his 123 companions. These two celebrations complement one another. Korean culture understands well the inherent dignity and wisdom of our elders and honors their place in society. We Catholics honor our elders who were martyred for the faith because they were willing to give their lives for the truth which they had come to believe and by which they sought to live their lives. They teach us how to live fully for God and for the good of one another.

A wise and great people do not only cherish their ancestral traditions; they also treasure their young, seeking to pass on the legacy of the past and to apply it to the challenges of the present. Whenever young people gather together, as on the present occasion, it is a precious opportunity for all of us to listen to their hopes and concerns. We are also challenged to reflect on how well we are transmitting our values to the next generation, and on the kind of world and society we are preparing to hand on to them. In this context, I think it is especially important for us to reflect on the need to give our young people the gift of peace.

This appeal has all the more resonance here in Korea, a land which has long suffered because of a lack of peace. I can only express my appreciation for the efforts being made in favor of reconciliation and stability on the Korean peninsula, and to encourage those efforts, for they are the only sure path to lasting peace. Korea's quest for peace is a cause close to our hearts, for it affects the stability of the entire area and indeed of our whole war-weary world.

The quest for peace also represents a challenge for each of us, and in a particular way for those of you dedicated to the pursuit of the common good of the human family through the patient work of diplomacy. It is the perennial challenge of breaking down the walls of distrust and hatred by promoting a culture of reconciliation and solidarity. For diplomacy, as the art of the possible, is based on the firm and persevering conviction that peace can be won through quiet listening and dialogue, rather than by mutual recriminations, fruitless criticisms and displays of force.

Peace is not simply the absence of war, but "the work of justice" (cf. *Is* 32:17). And justice, as a virtue, calls for the discipline of forbearance; it demands that we not forget past injustices but overcome them through forgiveness, tolerance and cooperation. It demands the willingness to discern and attain mutually beneficial goals, building foundations of mutual respect, understanding and reconciliation. May all of us dedicate these days to peace, to praying for it and deepening our resolve to achieve it.

Dear friends, your efforts as political and civic leaders are directed to the goal of building a better, more peaceful, just and prosperous world for our children. Experience teaches us that in an increasingly globalized world, our understanding of the common good, of progress and

development, must ultimately be in human and not merely economic terms. Like most of our developed nations, Korea struggles with important social issues, political divisions, economic inequities, and concerns about the responsible stewardship of the natural environment. How important it is that the voice of every member of society be heard, and that a spirit of open communication, dialogue and cooperation be fostered. It is likewise important that special concern be shown for the poor, the vulnerable and those who have no voice, not only by meeting their immediate needs but also by assisting them in their human and cultural advancement. It is my hope that Korean democracy will continue to be strengthened and that this nation will prove to be a leader also in the globalization of solidarity which is so necessary today: one which looks to the integral development of every member of our human family.

In his second visit to Korea, twenty-five years ago, Saint John Paul II stated his conviction that “the future of Korea will depend on the presence among its people of many wise, virtuous and deeply spiritual men and women” (8 October 1989). In echoing his words today, I assure you of the continued desire of Korea’s Catholic community to participate fully in the life of the nation. The Church wishes to contribute to the education of the young, the growth of a spirit of solidarity with the poor and disadvantaged, and the formation of new generations of citizens ready to bring the wisdom and vision inherited from their forebears and born of their faith to the great political and social questions facing the nation.

Madam President, Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you once more for your welcome and hospitality. May God bless you and all the beloved Korean people. In a special way, may he bless the elderly and the young people, who, by preserving memory and inspiring courage, are our greatest treasure and our hope for the future.