



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC PILGRIMAGE TO AFRICA

(MAY 2-12, 1980)

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
ON THE OCCASION OF THE AWARDING
OF THE JOHN XXIII INTERNATIONAL PEACE PRIZE**

Kumasi (Ghana)

Friday, 9 May 1980

Peace to all of you here present,

Peace to Africa and the world!

Dear Friends,

It is with great pleasure that I accept and approve the proposal of the John XXIII International Peace Prize Foundation to honour the six catechists here present, who have been chosen to receive the John XXIII International Peace Prize.

This award is linked to the figure of John XXIII. In his Encyclical "[Pacem in Terris](#)" he set forth in broad outline the principles on which a peaceful order of relations must be built: "founded on truth, built up on justice, nurtured and animated by charity, and brought into effect under the auspices of freedom"^[1]. In the example of his life he showed that peace must always be the first concern of all human beings, whatever their function or social condition may be. By establishing an award for peace he wished to encourage every initiative that has as its goal the fostering of fraternal relations between individuals and peoples.

The objective of the awarding of this prize, according to the intention of its founder, is to give solemn recognition to the merits of persons or institutions who have made an outstanding contribution to peace on earth. After Mother Teresa of Calcutta and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Foundation now proposes as

recipients of the Prize six individuals who represent a group of thousands upon thousands of faithful servants who effectively uphold the ideal of peace. These are the Catechists of Africa.

Chosen from among their people, the catechists of Africa have unceasingly worked for their people. Accepting hardship and personal sacrifice, they have given without reserve the best of themselves to their brothers and sisters. Faithful believers in the teachings of Christ, they have been instrumental in helping their fellow Africans to revere God, the Father of all; to respect the dignity of every person; to love their fellow human beings; and to foster reconciliation and pardon. Often untiring travellers, and always faithful servants of the local community, they have helped to break down divisive barriers, and to assist their brothers and sisters in need. Some of the catechists, in particularly trying circumstances, have endured physical or moral hardship and suffering in order to bear witness to religious freedom or to defend it. They have thus testified by their own lives that the relationship of man to God and the freedom to profess this relationship publicly are at the very foundation of peace. Yes, the catechists of Africa have truly been, and are, heralds of peace!

Trusting that this motivation will be admired by all men and women of good will, in Africa and in the whole world, on this the ninth day of May 1980, in the City of Kumasi, in the Nation of Ghana, I, John Paul II, bestow on the catechists here present the honour of the John XXIII International Peace Prize, for the glory of the Heavenly Father from whom all good things come, in memory of my Predecessor John XXIII, and as an encouragement to all especially the youth of Africa, that they may persevere in the ways of peace.

The peace of the Lord be with you always!

[1] *Pacem in Terris*, V.