



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE BISHOPS OF INDONESIA
ON THEIR "AD LIMINA APOSTOLORUM" VISIT**

Monday, 26 May 1980

Venerable and dear Brothers in the Episcopate,

1. In the name of Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd, you and I share, in different ways, *a common pastoral responsibility* for the people of God in Indonesia. This common pastoral responsibility is willed by Christ and is incumbent on us inasmuch as we are Bishops of the Catholic Church, successor of the Apostles, and members of the Episcopal College.

It is this common pastoral responsibility that gathers us together today in the service of the Church, for we are eager to see the light of Christ shine on the face of the Church. We are eager to see the Church as the sacrament of salvation penetrate ever more deeply into the fabric of Indonesian society and play a part in the different aspects of the life of your people. I know with what laudable patriotism you have supported the *Pancasila* or Five Principles of Indonesia's State philosophy, and how you have endeavoured to show the love of Christ to all your brethren without any distinction whatsoever. Like my predecessor Paul VI, who went personally to Indonesia to confirm the faith of the pastors and people, and to encourage all of you in hope and perseverance, I too declare my ecclesial solidarity with you in your ministry, as you build up the community of faith and consolidate your people in their Christian vocation.

2. As we assemble here today we draw strength from *our Catholic unity*, of which our pastoral role is one aspect in the mystery of Christ's Church. It is this Catholic unity that clarifies our pastoral role in its various dimensions; it gives us insights into the deepest truths of our apostolic activities.

Your local Churches are individual expressions of the one redeemed people of God, delivered from the dominion of darkness and transferred to the Kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we

have redemption, the forgiveness of our sins[1]. The people of whom you are the pastors are called to live the new life of Christ, giving expression to it in their customs and culture, and faithfully manifesting its original character in their daily existence. In this way they are able to enrich the whole Body of Christ by their unique contribution.

In effect, it is the one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church that subsists in your individual Churches. And it is the one, holy, Catholic and apostolic faith that is the great inheritance of your people, and that all of us Bishops are charged to proclaim "in season and out of season"[2]. As Successor of Peter, I shall be called to give a special accounting "in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who is the judge of the living and the dead"[3] for the manner in which I respond to the charge, laid upon me by Christ, to be the guarantor of the purity of the faith of the whole Church and to fulfil worthily the role of the Roman Pontiff as "the perpetual and visible source and foundation of the unity of the Bishops and of the multitude of the faithful"[4].

3. *The ecclesial communion that we share and foster brings us immense consolation and joy* in our ministry as Bishops of the Catholic Church. We are aware of being, together with our faithful, the one Church of Jesus Christ, united in him and living by his Holy Spirit.

Our communion is first of all a *communion of faith*. It is the apostolic faith that unites us, an apostolic faith that the Spirit of truth assists the Magisterium in transmitting intact and pure from one generation to the next. In this regard, as Bishops, we must constantly commit ourselves anew to the full profession of the Catholic faith, which transcends by far the insights of our human wisdom and theological reasoning. Only the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of Jesus can sufficiently guarantee our faith, and this he does through the Magisterium which we are called to accept and in turn to proclaim to others.

Ours is also a *communion of love* - a love that has its origin and pattern in the Most Holy Trinity. We have been the object of God's love, and this love unites us all together in the community of the Church. Among the tasks of a Bishop, how important it is for him to reflect the love of Jesus the Good Shepherd on a personal basis. At every moment of our lives as pastors, there is someone who needs our love, someone who deserves our love. Our priests, in particular, have a special title to this love. They are our friends, our brothers and our sons in Jesus Christ. For the entire flock our love is manifested in understanding and in generous, persevering service of their needs - especially their need for the word of God in all its purity and power.

Our communion is a *communion of prayer*, in which we all draw strength from the whole praying Body of Christ. The activity of prayer is very much a part of the life of the Church, uniting us with the living and the dead in the Communion of Saints. The saints of God are our intercessors. In particular, the Mother of Jesus, who is the Mother of the whole Body, intercedes for all who have received life in her Son. Legions of faithful Christians fulfil an ecclesial role of inestimable value by praying for the Church and her mission. We count on all these prayers, and are especially grateful

for the contribution of the sick and the suffering.

Our communion involves *the solidarity of the universal Church*. The local Churches are all concerned for each other, since it is the one Catholic Church that subsists in all of them. Our hierarchical communion is an expression of the bonds of a single Episcopal College that unites us in proclaiming the Gospel of Christ. By collegiality the pastors of the Church in Indonesia bring their solidarity to the whole Church and all the other pastors of the Church bring their solidarity to the local Churches in Indonesia. In all of this, the Holy See endeavours to exercise a role of service in coordinating activities and services beneficial to all. Above all, the Holy See is committed to the service of unity and truth, in charity. In accordance with the will of the Lord, the Successor of Peter strives to remain the servant of all.

In living this communion of faith and love, of prayer and solidarity, let us do everything, beloved Brethren, *to point the awareness of the local Churches to the great mystery of Catholic unity*. From this Catholic unity your people have received so much; to it they bring their own distinctive contribution, which is the incarnation of the Gospel in their lives and culture.

4. Venerable Brothers, let us always hold up to our people *a supernatural message of hope*, founded on salvation in Jesus Christ the Son of God, and communicated through his Church. It is Jesus Christ who beckons us to come to him in his Church, and through him to the Father, in the Holy Spirit. It is Christ who urges us to lead our people forward along the path of faith. It is Christ who invites us to open ourselves with all our limitations and our sins to his immense mercy. In the hope of mercy we present ourselves before "Christ Jesus our hope"^[5]. In hope we consecrate to him our being and all our ministry. To him we must direct our local Churches; we must speak about him to our priests, religious and laity; we must proclaim his person and his promises, his Kingdom and his Coming. This hope gives great encouragement to our ministry and to our lives; it sustains us and urges us on. In the words of Saint Paul: "For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those who believed".

Dear Brethren: in the love of Christ, in the communion of his Church, in the shared responsibility of our pastoral mission I embrace all the faithful of your local Churches. I also send my greetings to the civil authorities and to all your fellow-citizens, to all who make up the one family of your vast country. May God bless Indonesia and your own ministry at the service of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[1] Cfr. *Col.* 1, 13-14.

[2] *2 Tim.* 4, 2.

[3] *Ibid.* 4, 1.

[4] *Lumen Gentium*, 23.

[5] *1 Tim.* 1, 1.

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