



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO BANGLADESH

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO A DELEGATION OF THE CHURCH IN BURMA

Dacca (Bangladesh), 19 November 1986

Venerable and dear brother Bishops,

*Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,*1. It was a great joy for me to receive the news that a delegation would be coming to Bangladesh from the Church in Burma. And now I have the pleasure of meeting you personally. In the grace and peace of our Lord and Saviour I greet you all. The Church is a wonderful reality, one which could never be understood without faith. Yet even for us believers the Church remains a mystery. She is described as the Body of Christ, the family of God, the temple of the Holy Spirit. She is the community of all those who believe in Christ. She is present in every nation and is still the same Catholic Church. She is the pilgrim People of God entrusted with the Good News of salvation. She is a servant and teacher, a mother, virgin and bride. At all times, and in all countries, she experiences within herself, in the lives of all her members, the mystery of Christ's Cross and the mystery of Christ's risen life.2. As I greet you today, I am thinking of the Church that is the faithful in your beloved land. In Burma, Catholics make up only a small part of the population. As loyal citizens of your nation, and out of a genuine love for all your Burmese brothers and sisters, you feel a deep desire to help others come to know Jesus and his Gospel of mercy and peace. You are like the leaven and the salt of the Gospel. You enrich the quality of life of your neighbours and friends, but often in ways that are unnoticed. Through the fidelity of your own lives, you bear witness to the person and message of Christ.3. As I have the joy of this meeting today, I wish to assure you of the special love and prayers of the members of the Church in many faces throughout the world. What we feel is well expressed in the words of Saint Paul: "We give thanks to God always for you all, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labour of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. For we know, brethren beloved by God, that he has chosen you". Please tell the whole Church in Burma of my fraternal love in our Lord Jesus Christ. I am close to all of you in the trials and difficulties of your lives, as well as in your invincible Christian hope. And now I entrust you all to the protection of Mary, Mother of God and Mother of the Church. I ask her to give you joy and strength in Christian living, and to help you to be for ever faithful to her Son. With deep affection I impart to all of you my Apostolic Blessing, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. © Copyright 1986 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

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