



# The Holy See

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## APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO THE FAR EAST AND MAURITIUS

### WELCOME CEREMONY IN KOREA

#### ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

*Military Airport, Seoul*  
*Saturday, 7 October 1989*

*Mr President,*  
*Your Eminence,*  
*Dear people of Korea,*

*Oraemmane tashi mannege toe'o chamuro pan'gap-ssumnida.*

1. Five years have passed since last I was here, in Korea. Throughout these years I have cherished many happy and inspiring memories of my previous visit. And now, today, I have returned to this beautiful peninsula! I greet all of you, from the heart, with a prayer that God will bless Korea and all its people with his gifts of spiritual well-being and fraternal harmony. I am *grateful to you, Mr President*, for your kind words of welcome. In them, I hear the voice of the Korean people, welcoming me to share again in the life, the hopes and the deep spiritual yearnings of this ancient land.

In a particular way, I wish to greet *my Catholic brothers and sisters*. The joy of our last meeting, which reached its peak in the Mass for the canonization of the Korean martyrs, remains fresh in my mind and heart. And now, I have come to Korea, together with Catholic pilgrims from many other parts of the world, to participate in the great Eucharistic Congress which is being held here in Seoul. With them, I have come to worship Christ our Peace (Cfr. *Eph. 2, 14*), and to pray that our heavenly Father will bless every human heart, every family and nation, with his peace, a peace

that surpasses all human understanding (Cfr. *Phil.* 4, 7).

I wish also to extend my greetings and sentiments of friendship to my *fellow Christians* and to the *followers of other great religious traditions*.

2. “Even rivers and mountains change after ten years”. Dear friends: this popular Korean saying reflects a profound truth. Our world is undergoing rapid, even bewildering changes. Here in Korea, much has happened even in the five years which have passed since last I was among you. Like the world at large, *Korea has experienced some changes* which are disturbing, while others fill the human heart with new hope and confidence. Together with other peoples throughout the world, you have had to face the struggles encountered by all those who strive to build a society marked by social harmony and economic opportunity for all. Most importantly, as *Koreans, you have had to continue building a society which is worthy of the great heritage received from your ancestors, and worthy as well of your children and of generations yet to come*.

In the past five years, *the eyes of the world have increasingly turned to Korea*. The unforgettable celebration of the *Olympics in Seoul* helped to unite the peoples of the entire world in friendship and harmony. The fame of your country’s industrial progress and economic development has spread far abroad. Despite many daunting challenges, this progress has set an example for other developing nations. These achievements point to an *important role that Korea can play within the world community*. They lead us to hope that this nation will continue to be an example, not merely of material prosperity and progress, but also, and more importantly, of *the spiritual strength which must underline any mature and humane society*. For only a strength that springs from the spirit will be equal to the task of healing old wounds, overcoming deep divisions, and enabling all Korea’s citizens to take an active part in the political life of their nation as it struggles to achieve true peace.

3. Dear people of Korea: You who have received so much of lasting spiritual value from your forebears – are you not in a privileged position to show that material prosperity can, and indeed must, go hand in hand with *authentic spiritual sensitivity and growth*? In the face of the tragic divisions which continue to separate your own people, *do you not have the urgent mission to prove to a world torn by mistrust, strife and hatred that mankind does have the resources to end division and war, and to forge an enduring peace*? Those resources are yours: the spiritual virtues of mutual trust and reconciliation, of selfless generosity and brotherly love. They are a part of your heritage and your vocation as Koreans. They are a treasure that you can and must bequeath to your children and to all the world.

4. True peace, that peace for which we all long, is a gift of God. It is as a messenger of God’s peace that I have returned to Korea. I pray that *God’s peace may grow within the heart of each and every Korean, and bring forth rich fruit* for the future of your nation and that of the world. May God bless all of you and make you true instruments of his peace!

*Yorobun, uri modu himul moa cham pyong'hwarul iruk-hapshida.  
Kamsa-hamnida.*

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