



The Holy See

PASTORAL JOURNEY TO MALTA

FAREWELL CEREMONY

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II

International Airport of Luqa (Malta)

Sunday, 27 May 1990

Mr President,

Mr Prime Minister,

Dear Archbishop Mercieca and Bishop Cauchi,

Beloved People of Malta,

1. Earlier today, at Rabat, I was privileged to spend a few moments in silent prayer at the ancient Grotto venerated as Saint Paul's dwelling during his stay in Malta. In that holy place, I gave thanks to God for the *rich harvest of faith and good works* which he has brought forth among you since the Apostle of the Gentiles first proclaimed the Gospel of Jesus Christ to your forebears. I also thanked the Lord for the "unusual kindness" (Cfr. *Act. 28, 2*), with which, nineteen centuries later, *another visitor, the Successor of Peter*, was welcomed to Malta as he came to preach the same Gospel and to confirm his Maltese brothers and sisters in the same faith (Cfr. *Luc. 22, 32*).

This evening, as I return to Rome, *I wish to express my gratitude* to all who have helped to make this Pastoral Visit possible. In the first place, I renew my thanks to you, *Mr President*, for your gracious welcome. I am also grateful to you, *Mr Prime Minister*, and to the Government and civil authorities who have so readily provided assistance in organizing the events of these past days. Of course, I cannot fail to express my deep gratitude to my *Brothers Bishops and to the priests, religious and laity of the Churches of Malta and Gozo* for the warm reception accorded me at every stage of my Visit.

2. Throughout my time in Malta, I have been impressed by the deep attachment of the Maltese people to their *cultural and religious heritage*. Your desire to be faithful to this precious legacy as you seek to promote your development for the good of all is certainly a sign of great hope for Malta's future. Your traditions are a wonderful expression of your national character and identity. May they continue to guide your steps and strengthen your resolve.

During my Visit I have appealed to all who have the good of the nation at heart— political and social leaders, workers, intellectuals, the young people, as well as the members of other Churches and ecclesial communities: I have urged you to apply to the challenges of the present time the *Christian vision* which you have inherited from your past. In making this appeal, I have also expressed my confidence that you will *work together generously and effectively* to create a society inspired by the highest ideals of justice and peace, and marked by special attention to the needs of the less fortunate members of the community.

3. Beyond her own borders, Malta is esteemed for her efforts to promote *dialogue and cooperation within the international community*. Your efforts in this regard will be greatly strengthened by an equal commitment to *see those values realized at home*, within the social and political life of your nation. My parting wish for you is that *unity, solidarity and mutual respect* may ever lead you on as you strive for your country's continued progress.

With renewed thanks to Almighty God for the many blessings we have shared during these days, I pray, in the words of Saint Paul, that "the Lord of peace will give you peace at all times in all ways" (Cfr. *2 Thess. 3, 16*). May love and harmony always dwell in your hearts and in your homes.

God Bless Malta.

God bless you all.

Il-mulei Issàwwab fuqkom il-barka tieghu
(The Lord bestows his blessing on you).

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