



The Holy See

JOURNEY TO INDIA

**ADDRESS OF POPE PAUL VI
TO THE MEMBERS
OF THE NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS**

Thursday, 3 December 1964

This visit to India is the fulfilment of a long cherished desire. Yours is a land of ancient culture, the cradle of great religions, the home of a nation that has sought God with a relentless desire, in deep meditation and silence, and in hymns of fervent prayer. Rarely has this longing for God been expressed with words so full of the spirit of Advent as in the words written in your sacred books many centuries before Christ: «From the unreal lead me to the real; from darkness lead me to light; from death lead me to immortality» (*Br. 1, 3, 28*).

This is a prayer which belongs also to our time. Today more than ever, it should rise from every human heart. The human race is undergoing profound changes and is groping for the guiding principles and the new forces which will lead it into the world of the future. Your country also has entered into a new phase of her history and in this period of transition you too feel the insecurity of our age, when traditional orders and values are changed, and all efforts must be concentrated on building the future of the nation not only on a stable material basis, but on firm spiritual foundations. You, too, are engaged in the struggle against the ills that darken the lives of innumerable people all over the world: against poverty, hunger and illness; you too are fighting the relentless battle for more food, clothing, housing, for education, for a just distribution of the wealth of this world. Are we not all one in this struggle for a better world, in this effort to make available to all people those goods which are needed to fulfil their human destiny and to live lives worthy of the children of God?

Therefore we must come closer together, not only through the modern means of communication, through press and radio, through steamships and jet planes, - we must come together with our

hearts, in mutual understanding, esteem and love. We must meet not merely as tourists, but as pilgrims who set out to find God - not in buildings of stone but in human hearts. Man must meet man, nation meet nation, as brothers and sisters, as children of God. In this mutual understanding and friendship, in this sacred communion, we must also begin to work together to build the common future of the human race. We must find the concrete and practical ways of organisation and cooperation, so that all resources be pooled, and all efforts united towards achieving a true communion among all nations. Such a union cannot be built on a universal terror or fear of mutual destruction; it must be built on the common love that embraces all and has its roots in God, who is love.

The occasion of Our visit is the Eucharistic Congress. The Eucharist is the commemoration of Jesus Christ and his love for God the Father in heaven, and for all men, a love unto death. This love of Jesus is not a matter of the past; it is meant to remain present and to live in every human heart. Christ is dear also to this country, not only to those who are Christians - they are a minority - but to the millions of people who have come to know and love Him as an inspiration of love and self sacrifice. His words will always ring in the hearts of all men of good will: «The Son of man has come not to have service done to him, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many». Before he went to die he told his disciples: «I have a new command to give you, that you love one another» - and he gave them the sign by which they should be recognised by all: mutual love.

This is the meaning of the Congress: true love must be renewed in our midst and must become the inspiring force of all our efforts. We need peace and stability in our world, we need food, clothing and housing for millions, we need honesty and devotion and untiring work for bettering man's condition, but all these efforts must be animated by true love.

I pray that the words of the motto of this Congress - «order your lives in love» - remain imprinted in your hearts, and become a living seed that Will grow and bear fruit. May God awaken this love in all of us and unite us through that invisible, yet unbreakable bond which should bind all those who are sheltered in the love of God. May He make of us the one family of His children.