



The Holy See

JOURNEY TO UGANDA

WELCOME CEREMONY

ADDRESS OF PAUL VI

Entebbe International Airport

Thursday, 31 July 1969

This blessed moment, for the first time in history, the Successor of Peter as Vicar of Christ sets foot upon the soil of Africa. We give thanks to God for this great favour, and for this new meeting with the beloved African people, whom We came to know, admire, and love, during Our visit to this vast Continent while Archbishop of Milan, and also by the visits paid Us in Rome by African Heads of State, Ambassadors, Bishops, Priests, and distinguished lay men and women.

Thanks be to God also for the marvels of His grace, poured out abundantly upon this land, and for the generous response of Africa to the Gospel message. To these, We bear witness by Our pilgrimage to the sanctuary of the Martyrs of Uganda, whose blood bathed the Cross of Christ planted by the first Missionaries, and brought honour, renown, and the merit of love's highest testimony to all of Africa.

Our prayers today rise to God that Africa may flower forth with all the riches of its culture and noble traditions, advancing with ever longer strides upon the road of progress, "attracted to adopt new ways of life, introduced by science and technology" (*Africae Terrarum*, No. 13). The Church, you may be sure, will not remain a passive spectator. Already Church leaders have exhorted clergy, missionaries, and all Christians, to collaborate actively in each Nation's efforts towards economic and social development. For Development is the new name of Peace, «To wage war on misery and to struggle against injustice is to promote, along with improved conditions, the human and spiritual progress of all men, and therefore the common good of humanity» (*Populorum progressio*, No. 76).

To all, Christians and non-Christians alike, may Our coming to this Continent bear humble witness to Our sincere affection for Africa. May Our presence here, through the intercession of the holy Martyrs of Uganda, stir up that immense movement of brotherly love, which can transform the peace and progress of peoples from a difficult ideal into a glorious reality.

God save Uganda!

God bless Africa!