



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY
OF THE HOLY FATHER BENEDICT XVI
TO CAMEROON AND ANGOLA
(MARCH 17-23, 2009)

PUBLICATION OF THE *INSTRUMENTUM LABORIS*

FINAL WORDS OF THE HOLY FATHER BENEDICT XVI

Amadou Ahidjo Stadium of Yaoundé
Thursday, 19 March 2009

Dear Brother Bishops,
Presidents of the National and Regional Episcopal Conferences
of Africa and Madagascar,

Here in Yaoundé fourteen years ago, on 14 September 1995, my venerable Predecessor Pope John Paul II signed the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*. Today it is a great joy for me to present to you the text of the *Instrumentum Laboris* of the Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops, which will be held in Rome next October. The theme of this Assembly, “The Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace”, which continues along the path marked out by *Ecclesia in Africa*, is of great importance for the life of your continent, and for the life of the universal Church. The *Instrumentum Laboris* is the fruit of your reflections, drawing out important aspects of the ecclesial and social situation of your countries of origin. It reflects the great dynamism of the Church in Africa, but also the challenges that must be faced, which the Synod will have to consider. This evening I shall have an opportunity to speak at greater length on this theme with the members of the Special Council for Africa of the Synod of Bishops. My heartfelt wish is that the work of the Synodal Assembly will contribute to an increase in hope for your peoples and for the entire continent; that it will help to inspire each of your local Churches with new evangelical and missionary zeal in service to reconciliation, justice and peace,

according to the programme given us by the Lord himself: “You are the salt of the earth ... you are the light of the world” (*Mt* 5:13-14). May the joy of the Church in Africa at the celebration of this Synod be shared by the universal Church!

And you, dear brothers and sisters, gathered here around your Bishops in a way that symbolizes the Church which is present among all the peoples of Africa, I invite you to keep the preparation and the unfolding of this great ecclesial event in your prayers. May the Queen of Peace sustain the efforts of all who work for reconciliation, justice and peace! Our Lady of Africa, pray for us!

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