



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL I
TO A GROUP OF BISHOPS FROM THE PHILIPPINES
ON THEIR «AD LIMINA » VISIT**

Thursday, 28 September 1978

Dear Brothers in Christ, In welcoming you with deep affection, we wish to recall a passage found in the Breviary. This passage has struck us forcefully. It concerns Christ, and was spoken by Paul VI on his [visit to the Philippines](#): "I must bear witness to his name: Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God... he is the king of the new world; he is the secret of history; he is the key to our destiny" (13th Sunday of the Year: Homily of November 29, 1970). On our part we hope to sustain you, support you, and encourage you in the great mission of the episcopate: to proclaim Jesus Christ and to evangelize his people. Among the rights of the faithful, one of the greatest is the right to receive God's word in all its entirety and purity, with all its exigencies and power. A great challenge of our day is the full evangelization of all those who have been baptized. In this, the Bishops of the Church have a prime responsibility. Our message must be a clear proclamation of salvation in Jesus Christ. With Peter we must say to Christ, in the presence of our people: "You have the words of eternal life" (Jo. 6, 69). For us, evangelization involves an explicit teaching about the name of Jesus, his identity, his teaching, his Kingdom and his promises. And his chief promise is eternal life. Jesus truly has words that lead us to eternal life. Just recently at a general audience, we spoke to the faithful about eternal life. We are convinced that it is necessary for us to emphasize this element, in order to complete our message and to model our teaching on that of Jesus. From the days of the Gospel, and in imitation of the Lord, who "went about doing good" (Act. 10, 38), the Church is irrevocably committed to contributing to the relief of physical misery and need. But her pastoral charity would be incomplete if she did not point out even "higher needs". In the Philippines Paul VI did precisely this. At a moment when he chose to speak about the poor, about justice and peace, about human rights, about economic and social liberation - at a moment when he also effectively committed the Church to the alleviation of misery - he did not and could not remain silent about the "higher good", the fulness of life in the Kingdom of heaven. More than ever before, we must help our people to realize just how much they need Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of Mary. He is their Savior, the key to their destiny and to the destiny of all humanity. Dear Brothers, we are spiritually close to you in all the efforts you are making on behalf of evangelization: as you train catechists, as you promote the biblical apostolate, as you assist and encourage all your priests in their great mission at the service of God's word, and as you lead all your faithful to understand and to fulfill the requirements of justice and Christian love. We greatly esteem these and all your endeavors on behalf of the Kingdom of God. In particular, we fully support the affirmation of the missionary vocation, and earnestly hope that it will flourish among your youth. We are aware that the Philippines has a great vocation in being the light of Christ

in the Far East: to proclaim his truth, his love, his justice and salvation by word and example before its neighbors, the peoples of Asia. We know that you have a privileged instrument in this regard: Radio Veritas. It is our hope that the Philippines will use this great means and every other means to proclaim with the entire Church that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and Savior of the world. Our greetings go to all your local Churches, especially to the priests and religious. We encourage them to ever greater holiness of life as a condition for the supernatural effectiveness of their apostolate. We love and bless the families of your Dioceses and all the laity. We ask the sick and the handicapped to understand their important part in God's plan, and to realize just how much evangelization depends on them. To all of you, Brothers, we impart our special Apostolic Blessing, invoking upon you joy and strength in Jesus Christ.

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