



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE BISHOPS OF LESOTHO
ON THEIR «AD LIMINA» VISIT**

Monday, 21 May 1984

Dear Brothers in the Episcopate,

1. With deep affection in our Lord Jesus Christ, I welcome you to the See of Peter on the occasion of your *ad Limina* visit. In you, the Pastors of the flock, *I embrace the whole Church in Lesotho*, and pay homage to the vitality of your ecclesial communities that were founded through missionary generosity and zeal. The mystery of Christ's presence is a living reality among your people. Jesus repeats in your midst: "I am with you always, to the close of the age" (*Matt. 28, 20*).

2. We also believe that Christ is present with us in our fraternal gathering today. Together we offer to the Lord his Church in your country. We offer it to him in its vitality and with its problems, its hopes, its deep aspirations. On my part, as Successor of Peter and Vicar of Christ, I am close to you in all your pastoral labours, in the great task that is yours as Bishops: *to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ* in all its liberating and uplifting fullness. In carrying out this charge you make present the person of Jesus who "went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil" (*Act. 10, 38*).

3. I have followed with deep interest and support your efforts *to apply Christ's Gospel of peace and reconciliation* to local circumstances, and to do everything possible for your people at a time of drought and famine. I know that, while you preach salvation in the name of Jesus, you are also experiencing in your day-to-day ministry the reality spoken of by Paul VI when he stated: "Between evangelization and human advancement - development and liberation - there are in fact profound links. These include links . . . of the eminently evangelical order, which is that of charity: how in fact can one proclaim the new commandment without promoting in justice and peace the true, authentic advancement of man?" (Pauli VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 31)

For this reason I would encourage the various social and charitable activities of your local Churches: the generous initiatives made on behalf of the needy, including the zealous work of Caritas Lesotho, the health care services and the many educational programmes. I pray that the Lord will sustain you in all the different responsibilities that are yours. I know that organizing *pastoral assistance for migrant workers* is one of your principal concerns. At stake here are very important issues such as the dignity of workers, the sanctity of the family and the well-being of society.

4. I am likewise close to you in all your efforts *to build up your local Churches*. The training that your seminarians receive will have an immense influence on the future of the whole ecclesial community. I am sure that you will do everything possible to ensure that these young men will be solidly formed in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ. All efforts expended in the formation of the religious and the catechists are likewise a vital contribution to the very life of the Church in Lesotho.

I would ask you that, on your return to your dioceses, you would communicate my message to all the faithful: "My love be with you all in Christ Jesus" (*1 Cor. 16, 23*). I offer to the Christian families the expression of my support and esteem as they strive to live their lofty vocation in persevering fidelity. Amid the difficulties and temptations of life, may they never doubt the power of Christ's grace. A special word of gratitude, which I present in the name of Christ, goes to all those who closely collaborate with you in the pastoral mission of the Church. I am thinking of all the generous priests, religious Brothers and Sisters and dedicated catechists who, by their united efforts, build up the Church of the living God. To each and every one of these and to all God's people I send my Apostolic Blessing, invoking upon them the loving protection of Mary, the Mother of Jesus and Mother of the Church.