



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II

TO A DELEGATION FROM ETHIOPIA Monday, 24 March 1986

Dear Friends in Christ,

In the course of your journey to various parts of the world in which you are meeting a wide range of people, it has been your desire to meet the Bishop of Rome and some of his collaborators here at the Vatican. I am very happy to receive you and I extend to you a very cordial welcome. I would also offer my thanks to Caritas Internationalis for organizing and facilitating your stay in Rome.

The terrible experience of famine, which your country has undergone for several years, has touched the consciences of many people and led them to help the people of Ethiopia. The Catholic Church, by various means and at various different levels, has been part, and will continue to be part, of this generous endeavour. It is an endeavour which is vital not only for your own country, which is not yet completely free from this scourge of famine, but also for Ethiopia's neighbour countries, and other countries of the world.

I hope that your Delegation's mission, here and in the different countries you are visiting, may help to reassure those people who have been moved to share with their brothers and sisters in need and may elicit from them an ever deeper degree of generosity.

You have made this visit in the name of the Christians of Ethiopia. Your Delegation is an ecumenical one. This is living proof that "co-operation among all Christians vividly expresses that bond which already unites them, and it sets in clearer relief the features of Christ the Servant" . We know that right from the earliest days of the Church mutual support and sharing with those in need were vital concerns of the Apostle Paul, who saw these things as a sign and a criterion of unity among Christian communities. Today Christians are searching together for paths that will lead to greater unity among them. They do this in a spirit of respect and mutual confidence, and in obedience to the words of Christ, who at the Last Supper prayed for the unity of all his followers .

The tragic situation of millions of starving human beings obliges us all to a mission of service. By serving the poor and by sharing with them we also come to a fuller understanding of one another we deepen our mutual respect and thus prepare the way that leads to Christian Unity .

With these thoughts, I express again my joy in welcoming you and I thank you for your visit. May God bless you all.

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