



The Holy See

**WORDS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II
BEFORE THE MASS FOR THE CENTENARY
OF THE EVANGELIZATION OF NIGERIA**

Tuesday, 3 February 1987

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I am pleased to welcome you today and to celebrate the Eucharist with you in a spirit of gratitude to God for the Centenary of the Evangelization of Nigeria. This important occasion causes us to reflect on the wonderful way that so many people of your country, in the past hundred years, have heard and embraced the Good News of salvation. Each one of you stands as a witness to this happy achievement of God's grace. You are living symbols of the fruitfulness of the Gospel.

It is a great joy for me to be with you then around this Altar of Sacrifice. For as the Second Vatican Council reminds us, the Eucharist is "the source and the summit of all the preaching of the Gospel" (*Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 5). In the Eucharist, we praise the Holy Trinity for the blessings of the past; we celebrate Christ's presence with us now; and we are strengthened to fulfil our own role in the saving mission of the Church.

Let us join our hearts and voices this day in praying for the entire Church in Nigeria: for her clergy and religious, for all her laity and in a special way for the sick and suffering. May the Word of God continue to bear fruit and flourish in your land.

Copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana