



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO ZIMBABWE, BOTSWANA, LESOTHO, SWAZILAND AND MOZAMBIQUE

FAREWELL CEREMONY

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

*International Airport of Harare, Zimbabwe
Tuesday, 13 September 1988*

*Your Excellency President Mugabe,
Brothers Bishops,
Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Friends,*

1. The hour has come for me to leave Zimbabwe, the first stage on my apostolic visit to Southern Africa.

With gratitude to God, I express to all of you present here and to all the wonderful people of Zimbabwe my joy at having been able to spend these days in your country. My stay was short, but it was intense, filled with prayer, celebration and friendship.

I thank you for the warm welcome and fine hospitality with which you received me from the first moment.

I carry you with me in my heart, especially the young, the sick, the needy and those who are alone. I remember you all in my prayers.

2. My meeting with my brothers of the *Inter-Regional Meeting of Bishops of Southern Africa*, gathered for their Second Plenary Assembly, represented a very significant moment of this journey. I thank the Lord that our meeting was marked by a deep and intense communion between the Bishop of Rome and the pastors of the Church in this region. I implore God's grace upon the

outcome of their Assembly so that the decisions taken will bear abundant fruit for the good of the Church and of society.

3. *Mr President*, I thank you again for having personally met me on my arrival, for kindly inviting me to visit you at the State House and for all that you have done to make this visit possible.

I also wish to thank the Members of the Government who have been present at various venues, the national and local authorities, the staff of the various Ministries, the members of the police and security services and all those who have helped in the preparation and course of this visit.

4. To you, *dear bishops of Zimbabwe*, who with the priests, religious and laity have been the special object of my attention here, I offer my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation. My thanks goes to all those who have given of their time and energies in making this visit a success, providing transport and support so that people could come to pray with the Pope and to celebrate with him the mysteries of faith.

As the Successor of Peter I have come to confirm the faith of my brothers and sisters. I am truly happy to have met so many of you, to have listened to your concerns and aspirations and I encourage you all to persevere in the ecclesial and pastoral tasks you have undertaken.

I have experienced the vitality of your Catholic communities. I have seen how committed you are to education, especially through your schools, how dedicated to health care, how active in promoting justice and harmony, in serving the needs of the poor and of refugees.

I am fully aware of the fervour with which you encourage vocations and prepare the candidates to the priesthood and religious life, of the interest you take in the well-being of the family, in the training of youth and in the development of the world of culture.

For all this I give thanks to our Lord Jesus Christ. May he bless your apostolate.

5. To the brothers and sisters of the *other Christian Ecclesial Communities* who welcomed me so warmly in the Anglican Cathedral of Saint John at Bulawayo goes my sincere word of friendship and goodwill. We have prayed and reflected together. May the Lord Jesus Christ lead us further along the path of mutual esteem and love.

I thank the journalists and the communications personnel who helped to report my words and whose skills have served in these days to make Zimbabwe better known to the world.

Upon all the inhabitants of Zimbabwe I implore God's love and peace!

God bless Zimbabwe!

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