



The Holy See

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

FAREWELL CEREMONY

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II

*International Airport of Gaborone, Botswana
Wednesday, 14 September 1988*

*Your Excellency President Masire,
Bishop Setlalekgosi,
Dear Friends,*

1. The time has come for me to take leave of your country. As I do so, I can assure you that it has been a great joy for me to make this pastoral visit. Since my arrival yesterday morning, I have accumulated many *memories of the land and people of Botswana* that I will treasure. You will always have a special place in the Pope's heart and in his prayers.

I am gratified by the *kindness, courtesy and affection* that have accompanied me everywhere over the past twenty-four hours. I have been cordially welcomed by all those whom I have met, whether Catholics, fellow Christians, or members of other religions. I am confident that *this experience of mutual respect and esteem* truly exemplifies the desire of all people of good will to live together in peace. May God bless all your efforts to create greater love and understanding in the world.

It has been my special joy to witness firsthand the *vitality of the Catholic Church* in Botswana. In accord with Christ's will, I came to confirm my brothers and sisters in their faith. I have been edified by their efforts to live the Gospel and to share it with others. The enthusiasm and commitment of *young people*, in particular, is a source of encouragement for the future. Through *mutual love* and through *service to others*, may the clergy, religious and laity of Botswana always

be a sign to their fellow citizens of God's infinite love for mankind.

2. As I prepare to depart, I offer *thanks to Almighty God*, the Father of Mercies, for without his blessing all our labours are in vain. I thank the many people, especially the sick and the elderly, who *by their prayers* have contributed to the spiritual preparation for this visit.

Mr President: I am grateful to you and to all the members of Government for the many courtesies extended to me, and for your personal kindness in welcoming me upon my arrival and at the State House. I also wish to thank *Bishop Setlalekgosi* for receiving me as a brother in Christ and for offering me his gracious hospitality.

My gratitude also extends to *all those in the Church and in Government* who so diligently prepared this visit: those who helped in planning the events, especially the liturgy; those who made ready the various sites; those responsible for security, good order and transport; and the representatives of the media who have made it possible for others around the world to share the joy of this visit. Nor may I fail to mention all those who came out to greet the Pope and to hear his words. *May God bless all of you.*

3. Dear friends: the Liturgy I celebrated yesterday spoke of *justice and peace*. It re-echoed the timeless message that justice and peace are both a *gift of God and a work of man*. Without God we could never hope to understand, much less experience, the true nature of justice and peace. He offers them to us as gifts; we will find them only if we look to him. At the same time it is our *moral duty as creatures* made in God's image and likeness to conform our lives to these divine gifts. Our world must be governed by *love* rather than hate, *forgiveness* rather than enmity, *self-giving* rather than selfishness, *respect* for others rather than domination. Only in this way can we hope to enjoy the justice and peace for which humanity yearns.

As I leave your country, it is my hope and prayer that the people of Botswana will always *choose wisely* the paths that lie ahead. May the *love of God and of neighbour* be your guide. May *love for justice* be your constant aim, so that you and your children's children may continue to enjoy in this oasis of peace God's special *gift of peace*.

God bless all of you. *God bless Botswana.*

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