



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY
TO MADAGASCAR, LA RÉUNION,
ZAMBIA AND MALAWI

MEETING WITH THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF ZAMBIA

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

*Independence Stadium, Lusaka
Wednesday, 3 May 1989*

*Mr President,
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
Dear Young People of Zambia,
Moni nonse (I greet everyone).*

1. I am very happy to be able to spend some time with you in your own beautiful country of Zambia. I greet you with the words of Saint Paul: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (*Phil. 1, 2*). *I come here today with hope and joy*: the hope that we share with Jesus our Brother, and the joy that his Gospel – the Good News – proclaims to all people of good will. My joy echoes that of Saint Paul when he addressed the Christians in Philippi: "I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you, thankful for your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now" (*Phil. 1, 3-5*).

The "first day" on which the Gospel message was brought to Zambia by Catholic missionaries was almost a century ago. Preparations for the centenary celebrations have already begun. As we look back over the past hundred years, *we look to the future as well* because the Church is a pilgrim people always moving towards the final meeting with Christ.

Today I thank God for this opportunity of sharing in your hopes and concerns. I thank Archbishop

Mutale and the youth representative for their inspiring words. Above all, *I thank God for your vitality and your youth*. “To be young is already in itself a special and specific treasure for every young man and young woman” (Cfr. Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Epistula apostolica ad iuvenes internationali vertente anno iuventuti dicato, 3, die 31 mar. 1985: Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, VIII, 1 [1985] 760*). I thank God for your joy in life, in a world which knows so much sorrow and pain. I thank you for your welcome, which you expressed in dance and song: song and movements which speak of the harmony of creation and the praise you wish to offer to him who is the life of your soul. Your desire to celebrate in song and dance today shows the Church’s desire to celebrate and share the message of Christ’s love with the whole world.

2. As in so many countries of the world, you young people of Zambia make up the majority of the nation’s population. You are indeed a young nation: a young nation with enormous potential, not only because of your mineral and agricultural resources but especially and above all because of your *human potential*. As I look at you from where I stand, I see before me *a treasure of enormous value*. I see smiling, happy faces: I see eyes that wish to look for what is good in others; lips that want to speak the truth; limbs that are ready and willing to build up this country and make it stronger and more beautiful for your own children. You have an immense potential *to do good*, to foster peace, harmony and tolerance, to better the economic and social conditions of this country. You rightly want to improve educational and employment opportunities. You ask for guidance and inspired leadership. You must remember, however, that positive and lasting changes can come about only if built upon fairness and justice. True progress is not to be measured by a greater number of cars or radios, but by the way in which the poor and neglected are treated, by the way they have the Gospel presented to them.

You have the energy and vitality to do this and I am aware of your struggles. I have come to support and encourage you. The Church in your country and throughout the world commits herself to unifying people of differing traditions *in the name of Christ*, to promoting peace and human rights. The bishops of Zambia are at your side in your search for a brighter future.

3. You have a spirit of generosity, enthusiasm and idealism which belongs to youth and which is evident here this evening. My dear young friends: *allow Jesus and his message* to challenge you. Jesus does not offer you a “quick deal” or flashy clothes. For that reason the fascination of the *samos* and the *dilus* is illusory. *Daga smoking* is an escape. Jesus is beckoning you to go on a real journey with him – a journey in faith, which will demand all your generosity, enthusiasm and courage. It can be a wonderful adventure. But Jesus is depending on you; he depends on your help to free the world of sin and selfishness. He is a sure light in a world darkened by escapism and the confusion of values. But he is depending on you to reflect that light in your lives. Do not allow your potential to waste away. Christ needs all that you can give.

Christ needs you to share the gift of your youthfulness with those who have grown old and who feel the burden of the years. He needs you to give yourselves to the poor and to share your

knowledge with the illiterate and those who cannot attend school. To Christ, what you have is not important, but *who you are*. Rejoice in being able to give generously.

4. Saint Paul once told the Colossians: “You are God’s chosen race, his saints”. Today, my young friends, I address these words *to you*. *You are* God’s chosen race. He has chosen you and “*he loves you*”. He wants you to use your enthusiasm, and all the gifts of youth. Why? Because he wants you to be his saints. This is your vocation. It is a call to all the baptized. It is a call to each one of you.

All of us can readily associate ourselves with the call to improve economic and social conditions; we all understand the need for greater justice, and we can easily get swept along by our emotions in the pursuit of these ideals. But Jesus is calling us to be saints. He wants *you to be his saints in Zambia today*. He is not only calling the bishops, the priests, the Sisters and the catechists to be holy – he is calling *everyone*, all of us together.

5. The theme of our meeting today is “*Together in Christ*”. Christ wants us *to be seen together and to be together* – as brothers and sisters in one faith, hope and Baptism. For this reason Saint Paul says: “Bear with one another, forgive each other as soon as a quarrel begins” (*Col. 3, 13*).

How can we become saints if there are arguments in our families, disputes at work, disagreements in our relationships? How can we become holy if we do not take up the challenge to work and improve conditions by our own honest efforts? How can we become saints if we do not pray and experience the love of God made visible in *Christ*. He is not divided or separated in any way. Neither must our own: “May the peace of Christ reign in your hearts because it is for this that you were called together as parts of one body” (*Ibid. 3, 15*).

We are parts of the one Body of Christ. He is not divided or separated in any way. Neither must we be. Let us walk together – together in Christ – united in faith, hope and love. Do not be afraid to bring Christ to your own friends. *Be evangelizers* as the first missionaries were! To those who have left and taken another road, I say: *do not be afraid to come back* to the unity of the flock of Christ. The life of Christ can be lived fully only within the community of the Church, for the Church is the community of salvation. It was Christ himself who established the Church, and it is in the Church that we discover what it means to live together in Christ our hope. It is here that we learn of our vocation to holiness and our mission to others.

6. My dear young friends: you are aware of Christ’s call to each one of you to lead holy and upright lives. *Zambia today needs people who will respond to that call and who will face modern problems with Christian courage*. We must always be on our guard against selfishness which can easily erode the generosity of youth. What is needed *now for the Zambia of tomorrow* are true values: honesty, integrity and truthfulness. True values come from Christ our Teacher and they are always positive. To these values we must add a final ingredient. Saint Paul says: “to keep them together

and complete them, *put on love*" (Col. 3, 14). Love is the key to peace and justice. It lays the foundation for a better life. It is also the way to holiness. Love is the outer garment and inner strength of the disciple. *It is the antidote to selfishness.*

I urge all of you to seek Christ and to follow him with all the love of young hearts. I ask you to reflect his love in your relationships, in your work and in your free time. The Christian life is a demanding one; it involves self-denial, a generous spirit, the taking up of the cross every day and following him who died for us. But always remember that *you never walk alone!* Christ is your constant companion.

Young people of Zambia: give your lives to Christ. Shape the culture and society around you with his love. Rejoice, because Christ loves you. Rejoice in your youth and never lose hope.

Remember: we are together in Christ!

Mlungu adalise anjamata ndi Adsikana. Akuzambia – Apapa akukondani (God bless the boys and the girls of Zambia – God loves you).