



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO THE PHILIPPINES,
PAPUA NEW GUINEA, AUSTRALIA AND SRI LANKA

10th WORLD YOUTH DAY

WELCOME CEREMONY

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

*Ninoy Aquino International Airport, Manila
Thursday, 12 January 1995*

Dear President Ramos,

Dear People of the Philippines,

1. I thank you, Mister President, for your kind words of welcome, full of the warmth and hospitality with which Filipinos traditionally welcome their guests. I greatly appreciate all that you and your Government have done to make this visit possible.

For a long time I have looked forward to stepping on to Philippine soil once more. The Filipino people are never far from my mind and heart, and I reach out to embrace each one with esteem and affection. We are indeed old friends, ever since my visit in 1981 for the Beatification of Blessed Lorenzo Ruiz, now Saint Lorenzo Ruiz.

2. My Brother Bishops, Cardinal Sin and Cardinal Vidal, and all the Bishops – whom I gladly greet in the Lord – expressed many times their wish for the Successor of Peter to share the joy of Filipino Catholics on the *Fourth Centenary of the Archdioceses of Manila, Cebu, Caceres and Nueva Segovia*. I am here to celebrate with the Catholic community of the Philippines *four hundred years of the organized and hierarchical presence and action of the Church in these Islands*. That first evangelization has produced enduring fruits of Christian life and holiness, of civilizing action, of the transmission – especially through a strong family life – of fundamental human and civic values. As the Third Christian Millennium approaches, we should all be

convinced that those fruits can thrive even more in concerted action by all sectors of society, in the building of a nation resolutely set on the path of genuine and integral development, and fully committed to the wellbeing of all its citizens, with special concern for the weakest.

3. The thought of celebrating the Tenth World Youth Day *in Manila, in the Philippines, in Asia*, has gladdened me and given me encouragement. The Spirit of God has led thousands of young men and women here and they are now filling the streets of Manila with their youthful joy and Christian witness. A large group of them are right here. *I greet each one of you*: I warmly embrace every young person here, all the youth of the Philippines, and all those who have come from other countries and continents.

At Denver, during the last World Youth Day outside Rome, we meditated on the "new life" which comes from Jesus Christ: *"I came – he said – that they may have life, and have it abundantly"* (*Io.* 10, 10). Now, here in Manila, we gather to hear him say: *"As the Father sent me, so am I sending you"* (*Ibid.* 20, 21). During these days we shall reflect on and pray about what these words mean for each one of you, for the young people of the end of the Twentieth Century, the young people of the Third Christian Millennium.

4. To all Filipino young people, to all gathered for the World Youth Day, I make this invitation: See the world around you with the eyes of Jesus himself! The Gospel says that when he saw the crowds, "he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (*Matth.* 9, 36). The Good News of God's love and mercy – the word of truth, justice and peace which alone can inspire a life worthy of God's sons and daughters – must be proclaimed to the ends of the earth. The Church and the world look to young people for new light, new love, a new commitment to meeting the great needs of humanity.

The young people gathered in Manila for the World Youth Day know this. The Church in the Philippines knows that it has a special vocation to bear witness to the Gospel in the heart of Asia. Guided by Divine Providence, your historic destiny is to build a "civilization of love", of brotherhood and solidarity, a civilization which will be perfectly at home among the ancient cultures and traditions of the whole Asian continent.

5. Mister President, members of the Government, and distinguished representatives of the Filipino people: the Church and the political community work on different levels and are mutually independent, but they serve the same human beings (cfr. *Gaudium et Spes*, 76). In that service there is ample room for dialogue, co-operation and mutual support. You have a very valid and specifically Philippine model of co-operation for development in *The Social Pact*, formally signed in March 1993. I pray that the "new solidarity" which *The Social Pact* espouses will be a striking success for the good of the Filipino people, and for the pride and glory of the Nation as a beacon of peace and harmony in Asia.

6. Cardinal Sin, Cardinal Vidal, Brother Bishops, Filipino Brothers and Sisters in Christ: I look forward to celebrating with you in faith the great things done in the Church and by the Church in these Islands over the last four centuries. Together we shall pray that God may continue to protect

and guide his pilgrim People in the Philippines!

God bless the Philippines!

Mabuhay ang Pilipinas! (Long live the Philippines!)