



The Holy See

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

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PEOPLE OF SYDNEY**

*"Sydney Domain" (Sydney, Australia)
Wednesday, 18 January 1995*

Dear Australian Friends: Good evening!

1. As you can see, I am once more here in Australia. In recent months some people wondered if I would be able to come. But Divine Providence has allowed me to make this present pilgrimage, which has already taken me to Manila in the Philippines for the *World Youth Day* and the *Four Hundredth Anniversary* of the Church's organized presence in that country. As you see the young people are very strong! They moved the Pope to come not only to the Philippines, but also to Australia! After Manila, I had the joy of going to Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea for the Beatification of Peter To Rot, a catechist who gave his life for the faith in a prison camp just before the end of the Second World War. Now, here I am in Sydney for the *Beatification of Mother Mary MacKillop*. And from here I will go on to Colombo for another Beatification, that of Father Joseph Vaz, the great missionary of Sri Lanka. As long as God permits I must continue to fulfil the ministry of Saint Peter: *to profess that Jesus Christ is Messiah and Lord* (cf. Mt. 16:16) *and to confirm my brothers and sisters in that true faith* (cf. Lk. 22:32).

I am grateful to all of you for your kind and gracious welcome this evening. I thank especially the Prime Minister of New South Wales, and all the Federal, State and Local authorities. I am delighted to be with Cardinal Clancy, my other Brother Bishops, and so many priests, Religious and laity of the Church in Sydney and from other parts of this vast land. I do not know if it is sufficient to say "this vast land". It is a continent! The smallest – but a continent! In the words of the New Testament I greet you all: "May grace and peace be yours in abundance" (2 Pt. 1:2). The

words of St Peter.

2. Here in the Sydney Domain, we are surrounded by impressive symbols of modern Australia, striking buildings which are as it were monuments to the blessings which Almighty God has lavished upon your country. We are reminded of all that the arts, sciences, government and religion have contributed to the creative and vigorous society which has developed in your land. To the believer these works of human hands bring to mind a deeper, more mysterious, reality: the fact that we ourselves are the *living stones* which God chooses in order to build up his kingdom among us. He wishes to use each one of us so that the world will be *re-established in justice and peace*.

You have just seen a drama presenting *the life and work of Mary MacKillop, Mother Mary of the Cross*. She is an eminent example of how God uses a person, indeed any person who really wishes to be God's instrument, to change things for the better, and to bring light and hope to the human heart. Her story, the story of Mary MacKillop, challenges all Australians to a radical personal and social renewal, calling you to embrace and live the hope which is ours in Christ Jesus (cf. 1 Pt. 1:3). Mary MacKillop consecrated her whole being to God, and by fulfilling the demands of her religious vocation she sought every day to fulfil the *first of all the Commandments*: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind"; *and the second commandment* which is like the first: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Mt. 22:37-39). Because the love of God inflamed her heart, she tenaciously defended the weak, the poor, the suffering and all those on the margins of society. She worked to assist women and families in distress and to eradicate ignorance among the young. *With a resolute will and a compassionate heart*, she recognized in each of her brothers and sisters the image and likeness of God; she saw in each individual a priceless soul for whom Christ had shed his most Precious Blood. In her, the unwanted, the unloved and those alienated from society found comfort and strength. Through her work she became a powerful source of inspiration to other like-minded women, and from their shared experience the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph was born. Mary MacKillop's faith and commitment have become a part of your Australian heritage: a faith immersed in the knowledge of God, a hope imbued with the presence of Christ, a love expressed by the selflessness of a sincere and undivided heart.

3. Australia needs the kind of commitment of which Mary MacKillop is such a striking example. Consider your country's history: present-day Australia has sprung from the men and women from all parts of the globe who came to your shores looking for a better life or seeking freedom, justice and tolerance. Consequently, yours is a society of multi-cultural diversity. In a world where unity is increasingly threatened by ethnic rivalry and racist attitudes, you must continue to be firmly grounded in the ideals of harmony and solidarity, based on respect for the inalienable dignity of every human being, without exception.

4. I am happy to have met here tonight the representatives of the various Christian Churches and

Ecclesial Communities present in Australia. At the beginning of this week of Prayer for Christian Unity, when the followers of Christ throughout the world implore *the Holy Spirit for the gift of reconciliation and unity*, let us join our hopes and prayers for the grace and wisdom necessary to overcome the divisions of the past, with their resulting misunderstandings and mutual distrust. I encourage you in your commitment to genuine ecumenical dialogue, even as I reconfirm that same commitment on the part of the Catholic Church, in the sure hope that one day Christ's prayer at the Last Supper will become a reality: "That all may be one" (cf. Jn. 17:21).

5. Dear Brothers and Sisters, in the midst of the splendid display of modern achievements surrounding us in the Sydney Domain, I give the simple reminder that each one of us is called to be a part, a unique and indispensable part, of a structure which is greater by far than anything we see here. God who created all things in order to communicate his love and wisdom is infinitely more expert than any human builder will ever be: seek to be willing instruments in his hands. Look to the example of one of your own heroic women, to the *saintly daughter of the Church Mary MacKillop*. Let her stir up in each of you the desire to be God's own handiwork. It is my ardent prayer that today too the Church in Australia will inspire, encourage and guide with the light of the Gospel the building of a nation whose history, as fully as possible, will be a history deeply marked by love of God and neighbour.

God bless the people of Sydney and New South Wales! God bless Australia!

God bless the Commonwealth of Australia! That is all for today! More tomorrow!