



# The Holy See

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**VIDEO MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE LEO XIV  
TO THE PAN-AFRICAN CATHOLIC THEOLOGY AND PASTORAL NETWORK  
ON THE OCCASION OF THEIR THIRD CONGRESS**

**[Multimedia]**

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*Dear friends,*

I send cordial greetings to all of you who are participating in the third Pan-African Catholic Congress on Theology, Society and Pastoral Life. I thank the organizers for their hard work in arranging this significant meeting. I also offer my prayers to the bishops, theologians, pastoral leaders, young people and all the lay faithful who have gathered to reflect on the future of the Church in Africa.

Three years ago, on the occasion of the second Congress, Pope Francis spoke about the importance of faith. Now, as part of this year's Jubilee, we celebrate another theological virtue: hope. Perhaps at times more prominence is given to the virtues of faith and charity; yet, hope has a vital role on our earthly pilgrimage. Indeed, it can be seen as the virtue that connects the other two. In one sense, faith and theology provide the basis for knowing God, while charity is the life of love we enjoy with him. Yet, it is by the virtue of hope that we desire to attain the fullness of this happiness in Heaven. Thus, it inspires and sustains us to grow closer to God even when confronted by the hardships of life.

As you well know, Africa, like every other part of the world, faces its own set of particular difficulties. When faced with these challenges and the perception that things do not change, it is easy to become despondent. However, it is precisely the role of the Church to be the light of the world and a city set on a hill [\[1\]](#), so as to be a beacon of hope for the nations.

In this regard, the theme of your Congress is particularly relevant: “Journeying together in hope as Church Family of God in Africa.” While each of us is called to nurture our own personal

relationship with God, at the same time, through our baptism we are united as sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father. Therefore, we have a certain responsibility to look after each other.

Indeed, a family is usually the first place where we receive the love and support we need to move forward and overcome the trials we face in life. For this reason, I encourage you to keep building up the family of the local Churches in your various countries and areas, so that there are networks of support available to all our brothers and sisters in Christ, and also to the wider society, especially those on the peripheries.

Finally, dear friends, I would like to emphasize the importance of seeing the unity between theology and pastoral work. We have to live what we believe. Christ told us that he came not simply to give us life but to give it to the full. [2] Hence, it is your task to work together to implement pastoral programs that demonstrate how the teachings of the Church help to open people's hearts and minds to the truth and love of God.

I commend you and your work to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, that she may guide and inspire your efforts. And may the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit come down on you and remain with you for ever. Amen.

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[1] cf. *Mt* 5:14.

[2] cf. *Jn* 10:10.