



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI
TO BISHOP JAMES EDWARD WALSH, MISSIONARY IN CHINA,
IMPRISONED IN SHANGHAI FOR ELEVEN YEARS***

Tuesday, 25 August 1970

Dear Brother in Christ,

Over fifty years ago you left your homeland with the first group of Maryknoll Missionaries to go and serve the beloved Chinese people. It was from the Church of Christ that you received your mission to preach the Gospel in his name.

Today you have returned from your mission—more painful than you perhaps expected. It is the Pope who receives you back and who thanks you in the name of Christ for all that you have done and suffered.

You have been a witness—authentic and simple—in joy and in sorrow, then in suffering and humiliation, and finally, in separation from the people whom you loved so much. For all of this we thank you also on behalf of the entire Church of Christ.

We cannot let the occasion pass without commenting on the mystery of Christian suffering which has been yours. Apart from the responsibility of men that is involved sometimes in suffering, we are convinced that it has great value. You have surely meditated long and often on the teaching of Saint Peter: “The merit, in the sight of God, is in bearing it patiently when you are punished after doing your duty. This, in fact, is what you were called to do, because Christ suffered for you and left an example for you to follow the way he took” (1 *Petr.* 2: 19 and 21).

You have indeed followed nobly in his footsteps. We know that your sufferings have not been in vain but that they are like seeds of Christian virtue that will grow up in God’s good time. The extent of their value is known only to the Lord. We are confident also that the example of your effective

and persevering love will help to show to the world and especially to the young the greatness of the missionary calling.

We want to tell you today that our joy is great to have you with us. We assure you of Our special and deepest affection in the Christ who called you and sustained you in your trials. With fraternal love We give you once again Our Apostolic Blessing.