



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC PILGRIMAGE
OF HIS HOLINESS PAUL VI
TO WEST ASIA, OCEANIA AND AUSTRALIA

***RADIOMESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI
TO ALL PEOPLE OF ASIA***

*Manila, Philippines
Sunday, 29 November 1970*

To you the countless millions of men and women, Our brothers and sisters who live in Asia, this crossroads of cultures ancient and modern, and in a special manner to those among you who are Our own children in Christ—the blessing of God, abiding peace and fraternity.

We are happy to address these words to you on the occasion of the inauguration of Radio Veritas, to which We desire to offer Our encouragement for an ever more enlightened, generous and fruitful activity. We also express Our appreciation to Cardinal Rufino Santos, who promoted this great enterprise, and to all those who have made possible the realization of this important work. It is Our fervent wish that through it there may reach you the echo of the teachings of Christ, to raise your hearts to the God of love and truth. We hope that it will knit among you, its listeners, bonds of evangelical love, so that, made conscious of «the joys and hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor» (*Gaudium et spes*, 1), you may together undertake the construction of a more just and more united society.

Brethren, this is the first time the head of the Catholic Church has come to this part of your continent, and providence has decreed that it should be in Our humble person. We are grateful, for We regard Asia with love and reverence for the venerable antiquity and richness of its millennial culture. This immense land is the source of great civilizations, the birthplace of world religions, the treasurehouse of ancient wisdom. We are now in a region where the cultural currents of the East and the more recent ones from the West have merged in mutual enrichment.

2. As We address Our words to you, We cannot omit mention of a consideration which is as obvious as it is worthy of being kept constantly in mind, Your continent, stretching from the limits of ancient Europe and Africa to the Pacific and covering very nearly a third of the lands given to man for his home, is inhabited by more than a half of all mankind. This fact alone gives some idea of the magnitude of the problems that face your people. At the same time it shows the importance- We might say the weight-that Asia has for the present, and, even more so, for the future of the entire world. This double aspect We regard with great interest, and with respect for those whose task it is to ensure with far-sighted wisdom, that development takes place with the necessary speed and care, not with clamorous and dangerous disorder, but in a beneficial and rational way. Our interest also goes hand in hand with Our good wishes and with Our willingness to contribute all that We can to this end. Our interest is mingled too with great hope.

No one more than Ourselves sincerely wishes to see you take your rightful place in the world and receive your legitimate share in the means and opportunities of economic and social welfare. No one more than Ourselves is aware of and deplores the situations of incomplete development or of unequal distribution that still exist among you, in the relations of one nation with another or among citizens of one and the same nation. No one more than Ourselves - because of justice and out of affection for your peoples, without distinction or preference except for the weakest and the most needy, through the very interest We have in peaceful coexistence and in good and fruitful cooperation within your countries, throughout your vast regions and also outside and beyond them -expresses the fervent wish that such situations may be eliminated at the earliest possible moment and as completely as possible, in conformity with the natural rights of individuals, of the various social groups and of all peoples.

We are aware that the difficulties are many, also in the technical sphere. These difficulties cannot be bypassed without worldwide cooperation and mutual and disinterested assistance. Happily the consciousness of this necessity is gaining ground and the realization of the duty of solidarity is growing among the nations of the world. We exhort you to act generously in this great movement. We exhort also those outside the continent of Asia who have the ability and the duty to do so, to offer ever more generous cooperation for the integral development of all.

In like manner We feel the pressing duty to exhort all those in positions of responsibility to deal decisively with injustices in situations and in relations among various social groups, wherever such injustices are found. We exhort them further to give an ever stronger impulse, with open minds and hearts and with a firm hand, to the human betterment of all citizens, giving particular attention to the needs and rights of the most impoverished and abandoned among those citizens: from the workers who aspire to just wages to those who work on the land, where there is often a crying need for wise agrarian reform.

3. As We utter these exhortations We are sustained by a great hope. This hope We would like you to know, is based not only on the help of God and on the responsible commitment of all of you -

from the most humble to the most exalted in your respective functions-but also on an awareness of the virtues and natural qualities which, in spite of the countless differences between one people and another, are common to all your peoples and of which certain ones constitute for those peoples a characteristic mark.

In fact, contemplating the past history of your nations, brethren, We are impressed most of all by the sense of spiritual values dominating the thoughts of your sages and the lives of your vast multitudes. The discipline of your ascetics, the deep religious spirit of your peoples, your filial piety and attachment to the family, your veneration of ancestors-all of these point to the primacy of the spirit; all reveal your interminable quest for God, your hunger for the supernatural.

These characteristics are not of value for your spiritual life alone. Taken together, they not only do not constitute an obstacle to the attainment of that technical, economic and social progress to which your numberless peoples rightly aspire; but indeed, they offer a foundation of incalculable value to favour full progress in such a way so as not to sacrifice those deepest and most precious values which constitute man as the being that is directed by the influence of the spiritual - the master, at least potentially, of the cosmos and of its forces, and likewise the subduer of himself.

Science and technology are proof of the conquest of the material order by the spirit of man. And yet it is under the shadow of these achievements that materialism has taken shelter. Wherever technology is introduced on a large scale, there materialism also tries to insinuate itself. With your traditional spiritual outlook, however, your sense of discipline and morality, and the integrity of your family life, you must be able to counter materialism and even help Western civilization to overcome the dangers that its very progress brings in its wake.

4. But materialism with all its negative consequences is only the outward symptom of a deeper malaise now afflicting large sections of the human family: a weakening of faith in God, or even the total loss of it. And when atheism turns militant and aggressive, as it has done, it becomes immensely more dangerous to individuals and nations. All the God-fearing peoples of your continent and their religious leaders have to face this common danger. Asia, where great world religions were born, must not succumb to godlessness. We pray, and invite you all to pray with us, that God's light and love may preserve your peoples from such a danger.

5. Here it is Our duty to say a word about the presence and action of the Catholic Church in your midst. We do so all the more willingly from this land of the Philippines, in which the Catholic Church has for centuries been fully at home. The Church feels at home not only here but in all your nations. What she has to bring to you also, that is the message of Christ, is not imposed upon its hearers but rather proclaimed in open and friendly words. It is offered for your instruction and meditation, and it is not such as in any way to cancel out or lessen the cultural and spiritual values that constitute your priceless heritages.

Christ is light and truth and life. And We proclaim him to you as he appears to our unshakeable faith. We are obedient to his charge, his command: Go, preach to all nations the good, the happy news, instructing them in my teaching of love and life. This We do, brothers and sisters, with humble love for you, with deep respect for yourselves and for your ancient and venerable traditions.

In fact, the Church, by virtue of her essential catholicity, cannot be alien to any country or people; she is bound to make herself native to every clime, culture and race. Wherever she is, she must strike her roots deep into the spiritual and cultural ground of the place and assimilate all that is of genuine value.

Our predecessors, the Second Vatican Council, and We Ourselves, have not only encouraged this movement but also furnished the necessary guidelines for it. Thus, while preserving the cultural excellence and individuality of each nation, the Catholic Church will be able to communicate what is of universal value in each of them to all the others, for their mutual enrichment.

Christ and his message certainly have a divine charm which the deeply religious East can appreciate. Your faith and love, overflowing into your daily life and activity, can make this message, and Christ himself, visible and acceptable to your countrymen as no preaching can do.

6. This mission of bringing Christ and his Church close to the men and women of Asia belongs not only to the hierarchy, the priests and the religious brothers and sisters, but to each one of you, Our dear Catholic sons and daughters of the different nations which We are now addressing.

Together you make up the People of God. Together you must show forth Christ to others. In imitation of Jesus Christ who went about doing good (Cfr. *Act.* 10: 39), Christians are the best friends of their fellowmen. Their faith must impel them to work for the sanctification of the world (Cfr. *Lumen gentium*, 31) and to take the lead in that indispensable movement of brotherly solidarity. It is this which must satisfy all men in their hunger for bread, employment, shelter and education; this movement must bring a response to men's yearnings for responsibility, freedom, justice, the moral virtues, and in a word, a «complete humanism» (*Populorum progressio*, 42).

7. We cannot bring Our words to a close without directing a heartfelt and particularly affectionate greeting to those peoples of your continent who are still oppressed by the tragedy of war. Our heart is heavy at the thought of the thousands of victims of the conflicts now taking place, at the thought of the orphans and widows abandoned, of the homes and villages destroyed, at the thought of the hate which is 'spread abroad and which often explodes, even today, in acts of war and terrorism, affecting also many innocent and defenceless people. We have not ceased - nor shall We cease - in urgent appeals, both in public and in Our meetings with leaders, that an unflinching search be carried out, with wise and persistent goodwill, for the means to suspend hostilities and to reach at last a just and honourable peace, which will ensure for all the peoples

involved freedom from disturbance, liberty and the chance for a serene and fitting existence. This appeal, this fervent plea, We wish solemnly to renew here and now. And to all those who are suffering, to all those who are seeking to alleviate their sufferings and to all those who are working for peace We send Our most sincere good wishes.

8. At the same time We renew from Our heart the expression of Our profound sharing in the bitter grief that in these recent weeks has struck a great and dear land, Pakistan, which has been the victim of a natural disaster the like of which probably does not exist in human memory.

9. Upon everyone, finally, upon all the peoples of Asia, upon their heads of state and rulers, whom We greet with respect, We invoke from on high wisdom and the will and sufficient strength to ensure the happy and rapid development of their respective nations throughout this entire continent.

To the heads of the religions of Asia and to their faithful We express Our esteem for the religious sense which they foster with such great concern for the well-being of their brothers. To Our dear Catholic sons and daughters, whom We once more recall with paternal affection, We extend Our good wishes and impart Our blessing.