



The Holy See

***RADIOMESSAGGIO DI SUA SANTITÀ PIO PP. XII
PER LA ISTITUZIONE DELLA GERARCHIA
ECCLESIASTICA NELLA RHODESIA DEL SUD****

Domenica, 24 aprile 1955

Once again a bountiful God has given Us the joy of speaking to Our faithful children on the vast and progressive continent of Africa. This time it is to you, dearly beloved of Southern Rhodesia, that We direct Our words; because this is your day. And its deeper meaning would seem to Us to be most happily expressed in the letter of St. Peter, which the Church reads in Holy Mass this morning. « You were like sheep going astray, but now you have been brought round to the shepherd and the guardian of your souls » (*1 Petr. 2, 25*).

Scarce seventy-five years have passed since that dauntless band of eleven eager apostles began their long and perilous journey by the slow and tedious ox-wagon from Grahamstown north to the Zambesi. Through them the voice of the Good Shepherd would penetrate into a territory of seven hundred and fifty thousand square miles, where more than a million of God's children lived in ignorance of the high dignity of their nature and its sublime destiny. And over the decades they and their children and children's children, three quarters of a million strong, have rallied to hearken to that voice, and the divine Shepherd has led them out to the green pastures of faith and hope and love in the Church He founded more than nineteen centuries ago.

Your Southern Rhodesia, dearly beloved, is but a small part of that original Mission Territory assigned by the Vicar of Christ, Our Predecessor of happy memory Leo XIII, to the Society of Jesus in 1879; yet its growth in the one, true Faith has reached a maturity that brings immense consolation to Our paternal heart, and is the reason why We have elevated your country to the important status of an ecclesiastical province. You have received this honour as a token of Our affection for you and Our keen interest in all that makes for your advancement in the life of Christ's Mystical Body. Let it be also a witness to the high hopes We have for the future. Our Venerable Brother, who is about to begin his twenty-fifth year of devoted service to your spiritual welfare, We

have been pleased to name the first Archbishop of the Metropolitan See of Salisbury. United with him the suffragan Bishops and the Prefects, who are present in your midst for this auspicious occasion, will guide you, encourage you, strengthen you to enlarge your knowledge of the Faith that is yours, to sanctify your daily lives, and by word and example to help your neighbour to come to know the one, true God and Him Whom He sent a Redemption for all men, Jesus Christ, so that there may be in the very near future in Rhodesia one fold and one Shepherd.

With a fervent prayer for all, civic as well as Church authorities, who have made these three days memorable in the annals of Southern Rhodesia, we are happy to impart to you, Venerable Brothers, to the priests, brothers and sisters who are your indispensable support, and to all the faithful confided to your pastoral care the Apostolic Benediction.

**Discorsi e Radiomessaggi di Sua Santità Pio XII, XVII,*

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