



The Holy See

MARIAN PRAYER "WITH AFRICA AND FOR AFRICA"
SUPPORTED BY THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS
AND BY THE OFFICE FOR UNIVERSITY MINISTRY OF THE VICARIATE OF ROME

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

Paul VI Audience Hall
Saturday, 10 October 2009

The Holy Father together with the Synodal Fathers and students from universities in Rome took part in the Marian prayer. Young people in nine African capitals were able to take part in the event via satellite streaming: Cairo (Egypt), Nairobi (Kenya), Khartoum (Sudan), Johannesburg (South Africa), Onitsha (Nigeria), Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Maputo (Mozambique) and Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso).

(Video)

*Venerable Synod Fathers,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Dear University Students,*

At the end of this Marian prayer, I address my most cordial greeting to you all, with a sentiment of special gratitude to the Synod Fathers present. I thank the Italian Authorities who have supported this initiative, and especially the General Secretariat of the [Synod of Bishops](#) and the Office for University Ministry of the Vicariate of Rome which sponsored and organized it.

Dear university friends of Rome, a sincere "thank you" naturally goes to you for having responded in such large numbers to my invitation. As you know, the [Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops](#) is taking place at the Vatican in these days. The fact of gathering together, the Successor of Peter, and numerous Pastors of the Church in Africa with other qualified experts, is a cause of joy and hope that expresses and fosters communion. The Fathers of the Church compared the Christian community to an orchestra or an orderly and harmonious choir, like the

ones which have enlivened our prayers and to whom we extend our thanks.

As on previous occasions, this evening too we have availed ourselves of modern technology to "cast a net" a network of prayer! linking Rome to Africa. And so, thanks to the collaboration of Telespazio, the [Vatican Television Centre](#) and [Vatican Radio](#), many university students have been able to take part in the Rosary, together with their Pastors, in various African cities. I offer them an affectionate greeting.

I address a very cordial greeting to you, French-speaking brothers and sisters, especially those of you who have joined us from Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Egypt. I ask you to stay united by prayer with the [Bishops of the whole of Africa, gathered in Rome for the Synod](#), so that the Church may make an effective contribution to reconciliation, justice and peace on this beloved continent, and be an authentic sign of hope for all the African peoples: "salt of the earth... and light of the world". May the Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Africa, preserve you in peace and guide you towards her Son Jesus, the Saviour! May God bless you!

Dear Friends, I greet with affection the many young students, especially those from Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and Sudan, who have joined us in our prayer to Mary, the Mother of Jesus. We have entrusted to her maternal protection the success of the Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops. May her intercession sustain Christians everywhere, especially the peoples of Africa, and may her example teach us to turn to the Lord and to persevere in prayer both in our sorrows and in our joys. I extend a special greeting to the young men and women of Africa who are present in my heart and in my prayers. May you always be uncompromising witnesses and active promoters of justice, reconciliation and peace.

I greet the university students gathered in Maputo with their rosary beads in their hands and the name of Mary on their lips, praying with Africa and for Africa that the Christian faithful, filled with the Holy Spirit may carry out the mission they received from Jesus: may they be the salt of a just earth and the light that guides the world to reconciliation and peace. Thank you, my friends, for your prayers and for your Christian witness! May the Virgin Mother to whom I entrust all the youth of Mozambique and of the other countries whose official language is Portuguese watch over you.

In preparation for today's meeting a conference was held in Rome, organized by the Office for Cooperation in Development of the Italian Foreign Ministry and the Vicariate of Rome on the theme: "For a new culture of development in Africa: the role of university cooperation".

In expressing my appreciation and encouragement to pursue this project, I want to stress the importance of the education of young intellectuals and of scientific and cultural exchanges between universities in order to propose and to enliven integral human development, in Africa and on the other continents. In this context I have entrusted to you in spirit, dear young people, the Encyclical [Caritas in Veritate](#), in which we recall the urgent need to shape a new humanistic vision (cf. n. 21) that will renew the links between anthropology and theology. In meditating on the

mysteries of the Rosary, we have once again encountered the true Face of God who in Jesus Christ reveals his presence to us in the life of every people. The God of Jesus Christ walks with man: and thanks to him it is possible to build the civilization of love (cf. *ibid.*, n. 39). Dear university students of Rome and Africa, I ask you to work in the Church and in society for intellectual charity, which is necessary to tackle the great challenges of contemporary history. May you be sincere and enthusiastic seekers of the truth at your universities, building academic communities of a high academic standard where it is possible to exercise and enjoy that open, broad rationality which paves the way to the encounter with God. May you be able to build bridges of scientific and cultural collaboration between the different athenaeums, especially with those in Africa. To you, dear African students, I address a special invitation to live the period of your studies as a preparation for carrying out a service of cultural animation in your countries. The new evangelization in Africa is also counting on your generous commitment.

Dear brothers and sisters, with the recitation of the Rosary we have entrusted the [Second Synod for Africa](#) to the maternal intercession of the Blessed Virgin. Let us place in her hands the hopes, expectations and projects of the African peoples, as well as their difficulties and sufferings. To all who have joined us in various parts of Africa and to all of you who are present here, I warmly impart the Apostolic Blessing.

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