



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO INDONESIA, PAPUA NEW GUINEA,
TIMOR-LESTE AND SINGAPORE
(2-13 September 2024)

MEETING WITH THE AUTHORITIES, CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS

Istana Negara Presidential Palace Hall (Jakarta, Indonesia)
Wednesday, 4 September 2024

[Multimedia]

Mr President,
Distinguished Authorities,
Your Eminences,
Your Excellencies,
Esteemed Representatives of religious communities
and of various religions,
Esteemed Representatives of Civil Society,
Members of the Diplomatic Corps!

I cordially thank you, Mr President, for the gracious invitation to visit your country and for your kind words of welcome. I extend to the President-elect my warmest good wishes for a fruitful period of service to Indonesia, a vast archipelago of thousands and thousands of islands surrounded by the sea that connects Asia to Oceania.

We could almost say that, just as the ocean is the natural element uniting all Indonesian islands, the mutual respect for the specific cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious characteristics of all the

groups present in Indonesia is the indispensable and unifying fabric that makes Indonesians a united and proud people.

Your national motto *Bhinneka tunggal ika* (*United in Diversity*, literally *Many but One*) captures well this multifaceted reality of diverse peoples firmly united in one nation. It also shows that, just as the great biodiversity present in this archipelago is a source of richness and splendour, your specific differences similarly contribute to forming a magnificent mosaic, in which each tile is an irreplaceable element in creating a great original and precious work. This is your treasure, your greatest riches.

A harmony in diversity is achieved when particular perspectives take into account the needs common to all and when each ethnic group and religious denomination acts in a spirit of fraternity, pursuing the noble goal of serving the good of all. The awareness of participating in a shared history, in which solidarity is essential and contributions are made by all, helps to identify the right solutions, to avoid the exasperation of contrasts and to transform opposition into effective cooperation.

This wise and delicate balance, between the multiplicity of cultures and different ideological visions, and the ideals that cement unity, must be continuously defended against imbalances. It is a work of craftsmanship, I repeat, a work of craftsmanship entrusted to everyone, but in a special way to those in political life, who should strive toward harmony, equity, respect for the fundamental rights of human beings, sustainable development, solidarity and the pursuit of peace, both within society and with other peoples and nations. From this comes the greatness of politics. A wise man once said that politics is the highest form of charity. This is beautiful.

In order to foster a peaceful and fruitful harmony that ensures peace and unites efforts to remove the imbalances and suffering that still persist in some areas, the Church desires to increase interreligious dialogue. In this way, prejudices can be eliminated and a climate of mutual respect and trust can grow. This is indispensable for meeting common challenges, including that of countering extremism and intolerance, which through the distortion of religion attempt to impose their views by using deception and violence. Closeness, on the other hand, listening to the opinion of others, creates a fraternal nation. This is something very, very beautiful.

The Catholic Church is at the service of the common good and wishes to strengthen cooperation with public institutions and other actors in civil society, but she never proselytises, and always respects the faith of every person. The Church wishes to encourage the formation of a more balanced social fabric and ensure a more efficient and equitable distribution of social assistance.

In this regard, I would like to refer to the Preamble of your 1945 Constitution, which offers valuable insights into the path chosen by a democratic and independent Indonesia. This is a very beautiful history. Reading it, we can see that it was everyone's choice.

Twice within a few lines, the Preamble refers to Almighty God and the need for his blessing to descend upon the nascent state of Indonesia. Similarly, the opening lines of your fundamental constitutional law refer to social justice twice: as the desired foundation for international order and as one of the main objectives to be achieved for the benefit of the entire Indonesian people.

Unity in multiplicity, social justice and divine blessing are thus the fundamental principles intended to inspire and guide the social order. They can be likened to a support structure, the solid base on which to build the house. How can we fail to notice that these principles fit very well with the motto of my visit to Indonesia: *Faith, Fraternity, Compassion?*

Unfortunately, however, we see in today's world certain tendencies that hinder the development of universal fraternity (cf. Encyclical Letter, *Fratelli Tutti*, 9). In various regions we see the emergence of violent conflicts, which are often the result of a lack of mutual respect, of the intolerant desire to let one's own interests, one's own position, or one's own partial historical narrative prevail at all costs, even when this leads to endless suffering for entire communities and results in wars and much bloodshed.

Sometimes violent tensions arise within countries because those in power want to make everything uniform, imposing their vision even in matters that should be left to the autonomy of individuals or groups.

Furthermore, despite impressive declarations of policy, there is also a lack of true and forward-looking commitment to implement the principles of social justice. As a result, a considerable part of humanity is left on the margins, without the means for a dignified existence and no defence against the serious and growing social imbalances that trigger acute conflicts. How is this often resolved? With a law of death, that is by limiting births, limiting the greatest richness that a nation can have, its births. Your country, meanwhile, has families with three, four, and five children. This is seen in the average age of the nation. Keep going like this. It is an example for all countries. It may seem funny that perhaps some families prefer to have a cat or a small dog, and not a child, but this is not right.

In other contexts, people believe they can or should disregard the need to seek God's blessing, judging it to be superfluous for human beings and civil society. They promote instead their own efforts, but this often leads them to encounter frustration and failure. Yet, there are times when faith in God is continually placed in the forefront, but is sadly manipulated to foment divisions and hatred instead of furthering peace, communion, dialogue, respect, cooperation and fraternity for building up the nation.

Brothers and sisters, in the face of the above challenges, it is encouraging that the philosophy guiding the organization of the Indonesian State is both balanced and wise. In this regard, I make my own the words of [Saint John Paul II during his 1989 visit to this very palace](#). Among other

things, he said: “In acknowledging the presence of legitimate diversity, in *respecting the human and political rights* of all citizens, and in encouraging the growth of national unity based on tolerance and respect for others, you lay the foundations for that just and peaceful society which all Indonesians wish for themselves and long to bequeath to their children” (*Address to the President of the Indonesian Republic and the Authorities*, Jakarta, 9 October 1989).

If at times in the past the principles mentioned above have not always been implemented, they remain valid and reliable, like a beacon that illuminates the path to be taken and that warns of the most dangerous mistakes to be avoided.

Mr President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my hope that everyone, in their daily lives, will be able to draw inspiration from these principles and implement them when carrying out their respective duties, since *opus justitiae pax*, peace is the work of justice. Harmony is achieved when we are committed not only to our own interests and vision, but to the good of all, to building bridges, fostering agreements and synergies, joining forces in order to defeat all forms of moral, economic and social distress, and promoting peace and concord.

Dear brothers and sisters, keep going on your path, which is so beautiful and just. And now I invoke a blessing upon all of the people: May God bless Indonesia with peace, for a future full of hope. God bless you all!