



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO TANZANIA, BURUNDI,
RWANDA, AND THE IVORY COAST

LITURGY OF THE WORD

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

Ali Hassan Mwinyi Stadium - Tabora (Tanzania)

Tuesday, 4 September 1990

Mtakatifu Paulo aliwaandikia Wakorinto: "Maana kama vile mwili ni mmoja, nao una viungo vingi, na viungo vyote vya mwili ule, navyo ni vingi, ni mwili mmoja, vivyo hivyo na Kristu" (1 Cor. 12, 12).

(Saint Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "Just as a human body, though it is made up of many parts, is a single unit because all these parts, though many, make one body, so it is with Christ").

Ndugu zangu katika Kristu,

(Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ),

1. Today, the Successor of Peter has come to Tabora to rejoice with you in the communion that is ours in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. As your brother in Christ, I have long looked forward to being with you. And now, *I already feel at home among you!* On this happy occasion, it is my pastoral duty to confirm you in the faith you have received, and to encourage you in the work of spreading the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord. Ninawasalimu nyote kwa ushirika wetu katika Roho Mtakatifu. Kwanza kabisa ninamsalimu kwa moyo wote Askofu Mkuu Mario Mgulunde, na ninamshukuru kwa maneno yake ya kunitambulisha. Ninawasalimu pia Askofu Mkuu Marko Mihayo, Maaskofu wote, mapadre, watawa na walei wote wa Jumbo Kuu la Tabora na wa majimbo ya Kahama, Kigoma, Singida na Sumbawanga. Kwa upendo mwingi ninawasalimu vijana wote wanaojitayarishia daraja ya Upadre katika Seminari Kuu ya Mtakatifu Paulo, Kipalapala. Na kwa heshima na moyo wa shukrani ninawasalimu viongozi mbalimbali wa

Serikali na wa kidini kwa kuwepo kwao hapa.

(In the fellowship of the Spirit, I greet you all. In the first place, I cordially greet Archbishop Mario Mgulunde, whom I thank for his kind words of welcome, Archbishop Mark Mihayo and all the Bishops, priests, religious and laity of the Archdiocese of Tabora and the Dioceses of Kahama, Kigoma, Singida and Sumbawanga. With particular affection I greet the young men who are studying for the priesthood at Saint Paul's Seminary in Kipalapala. And with gratitude and esteem I greet the civil authorities and religious leaders who honour us with their presence this afternoon).

2. Saint Paul told the members of the Church in Corinth that the many charisms or spiritual gifts which they had received were *the fruit of the Holy Spirit*, "who distributes different gifts to different people just as He chooses" (1 Cor. 12, 11). Like the landowner in the Gospel parable (Cfr. Matth. 20, 1-16), God apportions His grace as part of His mysterious plan for the salvation of the world in Jesus, His Son (Cfr. Eph. 1, 9-10). *All our gifts and talents are given to us in trust*, and must be used to encourage our brothers and sisters on the path of faith, hope and love. To each person the gifts of the Spirit are given for the common good (Cfr. 1 Cor. 12, 7). On the one hand, the People of God are endowed with an abundance of *charisms and gifts*, leading to holiness of life and the witness of good works. On the other hand, in the Church there is also a rich variety of *ministries, offices and roles of service* which all combine to build up Christ's kingdom of grace and peace. Each person has his or her calling and place in the Body of Christ. *No one is excluded from working in the Lord's vineyard!*

3. The *ordained ministry* of deacons, priests and bishops is of course the essential channel through which Christ continues to teach, sanctify and guide his followers in the way of the Gospel. The witness of *men and women religious* shows forth the love and meekness of Christ, His complete consecration to the Father's will and His interior freedom in the service of others' spiritual and material needs. Your local Churches have need of good and holy priests and religious! There are many of them here today. We must *pray unceasingly for vocations*, so that many young men and women will respond generously to the Lord's call. *Walei wote, waume kwa wake, wanao wajibu wa kubadili mazingira wanamoishi, wakifanya imani yao kuwa nyenzo ya maisha ya kila siku, na ni kwa nija hiyo, familia, jamii na mataifa yote vitaendelea vikifuata mafundisho yaliyotajwa kwenye Injili kuhusu Heri.*

(But it is lay men and women who must play a direct role in transforming the world in which they live, bringing their faith to bear on the realities of everyday life so that families, societies and entire nations will advance in the spirit of the Beatitudes).

The fathers and mothers of families, men and women in the home, in the fields, the mines or the factories, in every form of work and social life are called to exercise their "royal priesthood" (1 Petr. 2, 9), offering their whole lives to God as a "holy sacrifice" (Rom. 12, 1), showing forth God's goodness in the world and reconciling all created things to the Father through Christ (Cfr. Col. 1,

20). Mfano tuliousikia katika Injili ya leo unahusu waumini wote: mtu asikae tu bila kazi. Kila mmoja ashiriki kazi ya ujenzi wa Kanisa na wa jamii kufuatana na neema aliyoipokea. Bwana asema kwa kila mmoja wetu "Nenda nawe katika shamba la mizabibu". (*The parable of today's Gospel Reading applies to all the faithful: no one can stand idly by. Each one according to the grace received has much to do in building up the Church and society. To each one the Lord says: "You go into the vineyard too"*) (Matth. 20, 7).

4. Dear brothers and sisters: *How many and varied are the gifts with which the Spirit has built up the Church in Tanzania!* Through the wise and dedicated efforts of the missionaries, the Gospel was first preached among you. Through the patient labours and heroic sacrifices of countless *priests, religious Sisters and Brothers, catechists, teachers, and Christian parents*, the Church has been implanted in your nation. Seeing all of you here today I am filled with hope and confidence that *the Holy Spirit will continue to raise up men and women* who will selflessly devote themselves to the flowering of authentic holiness, and the generous service of their brothers and sisters!

What still needs to be done? Where is the Lord leading the Church in Tanzania after over a hundred years of evangelization and at the approach of a new Christian millennium? The Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops, now in preparation, is a "sign" that this is a special hour of grace for the Church on this Continent (Cfr. *Lineamenta*, 13). In coming to your country, one of my principal intentions is to appeal to you to meet the challenges of this new stage of evangelization with all your "gifts" and with all the resources of your local Churches.

Neither the specific event of the Synod nor the general task of evangelization are matters for Bishops and priests only. *The part to be played by the laity is of essential importance*, for it is a question of winning Africa to truths and values which, in order to be believed and accepted, must be experienced in the concrete daily existence of the Christian community. When the world sees your spirit of prayer and adoration of God, your solidarity with others, especially the poorest and neediest, your courage in times of suffering and difficulties, your self-control in the face of violence and injury, and your temperance in all things, then the world will ask: Why are they so? Who inspires Tanzania's Christians to such great love? At that point, the well-known words of Christ will echo in all their truth: *"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill-top cannot be hidden"* (Matth 5, 14).

5. There are countless ways in which lay men and women can *announce the word of God* and make known the "infinite treasure of Christ" (Eph. 3, 8). In particular, I wish to encourage the mothers and fathers of families to continue to lead their children in prayer and to teach them the love of God and the rules of Christian living. A special form of announcement is the work of catechesis in parishes, schools and youth movements: Ninawashukuru Makatekista waliopo hapa na wengine wote popote Tanzania kwa mfano bora na moyo wao wa kujitoa. (*I thank all the catechists present here and throughout Tanzania for their exemplary commitment*).

Never abandon your dedication to preaching the full truth of Christ crucified, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power (Cfr. *1 Cor.* 1, 17). In spreading God's word, however, both proclamation and catechesis must also be accompanied by a correct spirit of *dialogue in truth and love* with all those who do not share our Catholic faith so that harmony and faith will grow. Religious and moral convictions cannot be imposed; they must attract acceptance by their own intrinsic beauty and power to persuade.

The truth which the Gospel of Jesus Christ reveals is no "worldly wisdom" (Cfr. *ibid.* 1, 20), but the *reality of the Father's infinite and merciful love* made known in Jesus' compassion for the multitudes (Cfr. *Matth.* 9, 36), and in the Christian community's unfailing care for the least of Christ's brothers and sisters (Cfr. *ibid.* 25, 40). Now as always, *practical solidarity* with our neighbour is the most compelling and immediate demand of Christian love, and a most effective way of communicating the Gospel message. In the increasing complexity of modern societies, the work of human development and the promotion of greater justice and of the structural changes that will permit peoples and nations to provide for the good of all their members is another valid and necessary form of commitment on the part of Christians. What is called the "love of preference for the poor", as long as it excludes no one, manifests the Church's adamant defence of the human dignity that is every individual's inalienable right.

Ndugu zangu walei wa Tanzania, wake kwa waume, mnaitwa kuchukua jukumu zaidi, mkiongozwa na wachungaji wenu, katika utume wa Kanisa nchini mwenu na katika bara la Afrika. Msiuache "wakati huu wa neema" upite hivi hivi. "*Sasa ndio wakati wa mavuno*".
(*You, the Catholic lay men and women of Tanzania, are being called to become increasingly responsible, alongside your pastors, for the Church's mission in your country and in Africa. Do not let this "hour of grace" slip by. The harvest is ready!* (Cfr. *Marc.* 4, 29).

6. Nikiwa hapa Tabora, ninapenda kusema kwamba *Kanisa linawashughulikia kwa namna ya pekee wale ambao ni wazee au wagonjwa hasa vipofu na viziwi*. Baadhi yao wapo katika ibada hii. (*Here in Tabora, I wish to refer to the Church's particular concern for those members of the community who are elderly or sick, especially the blind and the deaf, some of whom are present at this celebration*).

Dear friends: you too have a very important and noble mission within the Body of Christ, the Church! Through your union with the Lord in the mystery of his suffering, you are challenged to grow in holiness, to know more profoundly and to share more generously with others the gift of God's love as it has been revealed in the sufferings of His Son. Through the spiritual solidarity which unites us in the "communion of saints", *your sufferings are helping to bring about the spread of God's Kingdom* and the triumph of His grace. Ndugu wapendwa, jueni kwamba, kuwepo kwangu hapa pamoja nanyi ni ishara ya upendo katika Kristu, ambaye ndiye Mkuu wa Kanisa.

(*Be assured that the Pope's presence with you today is a clear sign of the Church's love for you in*

Christ, her Head).

I wish also to acknowledge with gratitude the devoted service given to our suffering and handicapped brothers and sisters by the Archdiocese of Tabora, the Missionaries of Charity, and by our brothers and sisters of the Pentecostal Church. Here too, I gladly express *the Church's appreciation of the efforts of those who serve the needy* and those who strive through their *involvement in the political life of your country* to bear witness to Christ and to ensure a better and more secure life for all Tanzania's people.

7. Dear brothers and sisters: in the Gospel of today's Liturgy, the generous landowner *goes out at various times* into the market place to find workers to send into his vineyard. Some were present to answer his call at daybreak; others appeared later in the morning, and some were not sent until the day was nearly done. Does this parable not remind us that *it is never too late to serve the Lord* and to benefit from His infinite generosity? The Church today has great need of *young people*, filled with life and enthusiasm, to show to others the hope and joy which come from embracing Christ and His way of holiness. She has need of *mature Christians*, who have grown in wisdom and prudence as they have learned to let their faith in Christ permeate every aspect of their thinking and behaviour. The Church needs *holy and committed believers of every age*, who are nourished by prayer, solid in faith and zealous in proclaiming to the world the salvation, joy and peace which come from the Risen Lord!

As you strive to use the many gifts which you have received in Baptism for the building up of the Church in Tanzania, *I commend you to the prayers of the Blessed Virgin Mary*. Through her obedience to the word of God and her openness to the Spirit, she became the Mother of God and Mother of the Church. I pray that she will guide all of you in the ways of holiness and assist you in your efforts to live fully the great calling which you have received in Christ!

Mungu awabariki nyote! Amina. *(May God bless you all! Amen).*