



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC PILGRIMAGE TO AFRICA

(MAY 2-12, 1980)

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

Accra (Ghana)

Thursday, 8 May 1980

Dear friends in our Lord Jesus Christ,

1. I am deeply honoured by your presence here today. It is a pleasure for me to meet distinguished representatives of my Christian brethren of Ghana. I wish to greet you all in the charity of Jesus Christ. It means so much to me to have this opportunity to tell you of my intention, and the intention of the whole Catholic Church, to pray and to work sincerely and perseveringly for the restoration of unity in faith and love among all Christians.

The commitment of the Second Vatican Council, of my predecessors and of my own pontificate is based on the desire which Christ expressed at the Last Supper in his prayer to his Father for his disciples: "... that they may all be one"^[1].

2. All of us realize the great value that prayer has in accomplishing what is humanly difficult or even impossible. Jesus himself has told us: "What is impossible with men is possible with God"^[2]. We know how important it is to turn humbly to God, day after day, asking him for the gift of constant conversion of life, which is so closely linked to the question of Christian unity. An occasion such as this inspires in our hearts an ever greater desire for this unity and for the means that dispose us to receive it as God's free gift. Hence this meeting inspires us to pray together) to lift up our hearts in unison to "the Father of mercies and God of all comfort"^[3] .

3. At the same time as we pursue our efforts towards the goal of perfect unity, we give thanks for the great bonds that already unite us in faith in the divinity of Christ. We praise God for our common faith in Baptism as an incorporation into the death and Resurrection of the Lord. We praise him for the common love and esteem that we have for the Holy Scriptures, which speak to us of Christ and his Church. And by the grace of God we are already in a position to confess together that "Jesus Christ is the Son of God"[4]and that "there is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"[5].

4. Because we believe in Christ and in "the unsearchable riches of Christ"[6], we feel led by the Spirit to do everything possible to remove the divisions in faith that impair our perfect common witness to the Lord and his Kingdom, so that we may better serve our neighbour and more effectively bring the Good News of salvation to the world that continues to see in us a divided Christ. And yet we know that Christ has prayed for unity, and that the Father listens to his prayer. Christ's prayer is the reason for our hope and we know that "hope does not disappoint us"[7]. It gives me great pleasure to be informed of the worthy ecumenical activities taking place in Africa. I pray that the relationship between individual Christians and the relationship between Churches and ecclesial communities will make ever greater progress in truth and love for the glory of the Most Holy Trinity.

[1] *Io.* 17, 21.

[2] *Luc.* 18, 24.

[3] *2 Cor.* 1, 3.

[4] *1 Io.* 4, 15.

[5] *1 Tim.* 2, 5.

[6] *Eph.* 3, 8.

[7] *Rom.* 5, 5.

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