



# The Holy See

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APOSTOLIC PILGRIMAGE TO AFRICA

(MAY 2-12, 1980)

***ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II  
AT THE DEPARTURE FROM KENYA***

*Nairobi*

*Thursday, 8 May 1980*

*Dear Friends,*

1. After two unforgettable days, I wish to express my profound gratitude for the truly African hospitality which I have received here. The kindness, the openness and the joy of the people of Kenya have impressed me deeply. Now I know what it means to be swept up by the enthusiastic reception of an African community. More than ever, I now feel that I belong to you.

My mission now takes me to other African countries. Thank you for the strength and the joy you have given me. Thank you for having made me so much a part of your hopes and achievements, for having shared with me your determination to go on building a nation, united in its pursuit of just progress for all, faithful to its culture and traditions, strong in its belief that joint efforts will succeed.

I keep in my heart and I shall cherish for ever all the moments of this wonderful visit, all the people I have met; I shall remember your music and your songs. In the prayers we shared, I have felt deep communion with you, a communion that neither distance nor time can diminish.

2. My gratitude goes to His Excellency the President of Kenya, to all the authorities of the nation and of the city of Nairobi, to those responsible for public order during these days. I feel indebted to all the people who have contributed their time, their work and their services to create the conditions that have made this visit such a rewarding experience. A very special word of thanks to the management and staff of the Voice of Kenya and the local press, as well as to the foreign

media, which made it possible for me to enter, with my friendship and message, the homes and villages of many who could not be here. How much I would have liked to travel across your land and to meet each one of you, to greet and bless you, and to learn firsthand about your lives and struggles. I hope that the words and the pictures which the media have brought to you were able to convey my esteem, my encouragement and my deep love for every human being in this beautiful land.

3. How can I adequately express my gratitude to my brother Bishops for the moments of grace which we shared in our meetings and liturgical celebration? Moments of grace, yes, moments of divine grace; for I have seen that you have accepted the message of Christ. Your churches in the cities and villages, your schools and hospitals, the ministry of your priests, the dedication of your men and women religious, the sacramental life of your faithful, the many activities by which the laity assume their share of the mission of evangelization - all of this bears witness to the grace of God which is at work in your midst. At this moment of departure, I wish therefore to thank God with you for the dynamic Church in Kenya.

4. One last thought I wish to leave with you. A nation that holds God in honour cannot fail to receive the blessings of God. Even when you meet problems, even when new difficulties arise, your trust in God will be the guarantee that you will overcome all obstacles, and that you will build a nation where unity and love reign, where brotherhood and peace flourish, where everyone works together for the future in the spirit of *Harambee*. The Creator has given every human being a dignity that is unsurpassed and that is equal for all. Your common efforts in the further development of your nation will succeed when they are inspired by respect for the fundamental God-given dignity and rights of every man, woman and child, and by the desire to create the necessary conditions so that families and all people may enjoy the dignity that is theirs as children of God.

Assuring you once again of my fraternal affection and esteem, I now take leave of Kenya.

To all of you, to all the people of Kenya, I wish to say once more: thank you all! *Asanteni sana!*

Till we meet again! *Kwa herini, kwa herini ya kuonana!*

May God bless you! *Mungu awabariki!*

May God bless all Kenya!

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