



# The Holy See

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**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II  
TO THE BISHOPS FROM SUDAN  
ON THEIR «AD LIMINA» VISIT\***

*Friday, 30 October 1981*

*Dearly beloved Brothers,*

1. We have assembled today in our Lord Jesus Christ, under the sign of hope. Indeed, our very presence here together is a celebration of "Christ Jesus our hope" (*1 Tim 1, 1*), and all our reflections are made in union with him.
2. The history of the Church in the Sudan is a history of hope. The evangelization of your people was conceived in hope, and the seed of God's word was sown in hope. It was hope that gave rise to the dawn of evangelization ; it was hope that inspired all subsequent apostolic endeavours. Missionaries, who themselves were "stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the Gospel" (*2 Col 1, 23*), carried this hope to your ancestors. They themselves hoped in the One whom they preached, and in whose name they came to serve. Among the heroes of hope in your land there was the Apostle of the Sudan, Bishop Daniele Comboni, the centenary of whose death we have commemorated during this month.
3. Although far from complete, and despite innumerable difficulties, the harvest has been rich. The name of the Lord Jesus has been preached, and the hope of salvation has been proclaimed. Through divine grace the process goes on, as successive generations are led to perceive and identify-even if only gradually-the One who is the term of all prophetic revelation, the Lord of Hope : "I see him – but not in the present ; I behold him – but not close at hand" (*Num 24, 17*).
4. The centenary of Bishop Comboni's death has itself become a symbol of hope in the Sudan. On that very day, three weeks ago, missionary hope found fulfilment as Archbishop Znbeir succeeded his beloved predecessor, Archbishop Baroni, as the Metropolitan of Khartoum. It is also a joy for

me to note the various concrete projects that are being realized in conjunction with this important centennial celebration, as well as the zealous initiatives that your Episcopal Conference has sponsored in accordance with its pastoral plan of November 1979. And all these projects and initiatives are linked to the hope that is revealed in the Gospel of Christ. Further eloquent indications of hope and reasons for rejoicing are seen in the recent establishment of the Missionary Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and in the availability and assistance of other generous men religious.

5. Yes, dear Brothers, despite all the obstacles and tribulations that must be encountered on behalf of the Gospel, it is evident that the Paschal Mystery of Jesus is a perennial and effective source of hope for you and your people. Does not Saint Peter tell us that "we have been born anew to a living hope through the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead"? (1 Pt 1, 3)

6. The desire of my heart today is to confirm you in this "living hope", to assure you of my fraternal and prayerful solidarity in Christ Jesus, and to give witness to the love of the universal Church for those ecclesial communities over which you preside and for which you give your lives in loving pastoral service. My message is a message of hope motivated by love for you, love for your priests, your sisters, your laity. Through you and through all your people, united by word and sacrament as a community, the Lord Jesus wishes to keep alive the invincible hope of his Gospel. And at this juncture of history, you yourselves are called to shepherd your people, to lead them to place their hope in the merciful Saviour of the world, in the Redeemer of man. Yes, your pastoral service is to lead the flock entrusted to your care to hope in the efficacy of Christ's passion, in the power of his Resurrection, in the reality of his promises, in the love of his Person.

Beloved Brothers, your ministry and mine is to proclaim unceasingly the Incarnate Word of God, the Son of the eternal Father, "Christ Jesus our hope".

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\*A.A.S., vol. LXXIII (1981), n. 10, pp. 724-726 © Copyright 1981- Libreria Editrice Vaticana

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