



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO KOREA, PAPUA NEW GUINEA,
SOLOMON ISLANDS AND THAILAND **ADDRESS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II**
TO RELIGIOUS MEN AND WOMEN OF KOREA *Seoul (Korea)*

*Saturday, 5 May 1984 Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,*1. "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (*Matth.* 5, 10). The truth of these words of our Savior, *the truth of the Beatitudes, is manifested in the heroic witness of the Korean Martyrs.* For these holy men, women and children who suffered cruel persecution and death are blessed indeed. They are a sign of the power of God transforming the timid and weak into brave witnesses to Christ. Because they submitted to death for the sake of the Gospel, they have received a great reward in heaven and are honored by the Church throughout the world. In the presence of the Redeemer, they rejoice and are glad, for they were "counted worthy to suffer for the sake of the Name of Jesus" (Cf. *Act.* 5, 41). The truth of the Beatitudes is also manifested in *the priesthood and religious life, for these are a particular incarnation of the Beatitudes.* As priests and religious you bear witness to what it means to be blessed by God. In your celibacy or consecrated chastity, embraced out of love for Christ, you show your trust in his words: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (*Matth.* 5, 8). By your evangelical poverty lived in generous service to others, you proclaim again the first Beatitude: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (*Ibid.* 5, 3). And in so many different ways, individually and in union with others, you seek to incarnate the Beatitudes, to live a life which gives convincing proof that the Beatitudes are indeed true, that they are the sure path to holiness.2. I wish for a moment to direct my words to *my brother priests.* One of the greatest joys of coming to Korea is that I am able, here in your land, to canonize your Martyrs. Among them are priests, including your first Korean priest, Father Andrew Kim Taegon. The historic event of the canonization draws attention to the illustrious Christian heritage that is yours. At the same time, it stirs up in your own hearts a greater zeal for holiness, a desire to imitate the martyrs in your own specific way. Remember, dear brothers, that *priestly holiness means being like Christ: it means doing the Father's will;* it means faithfully exercising your pastoral ministry. You are called to "live by faith in the Son of God" (*Gal.* 2, 20) and to love the word of God. Each day you nourish your mind and heart at the table of the word so richly provided by the Church in the celebration of the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours. This word of God moves you to praise God's Name with joyful hearts and to obey his commands and counsels. It spurs you on to an ever more generous service of your people, in proclaiming the Gospel of salvation and leading the faithful in prayer. As you seek to give a shepherd's care to the portion of God's flock entrusted to you, you must have a special love for the poor and the outcasts, for those who are forgotten, for those who are sick or burdened by their own sins. You are called to give a generous part of your time to celebrating the Sacrament of Penance, and to instructing your people in its value and importance for their Christian lives. Never doubt the effectiveness of the ministry of Confession. Through you the Lord Jesus himself reconciles hearts to himself and pours out his mercy and love. And you too are called to experience Christ's mercy and love and to bear witness to your faith by your personal use of this

great Sacrament. It is above all *to the Eucharist that all your pastoral activities are directed* and from which God's richest graces flow. The Second Vatican Council gives us the magnificent assurance that "in the mystery of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, in which priests fulfill their principal function, the work of our Redemption is continually carried out" (*Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 13).³ And now, I wish to speak to the *men and women religious* of Korea, to you for whom God has a special love, and the Church a special esteem. Dear brothers and sisters, as religious you share in a particular way in the mission of Christ. By your personal and liturgical prayer and by the specific charisms of your Institutes, you fulfill a unique and important role in the Church. Above all, it is given to you *to bear witness to Jesus Christ* who was always obedient to the Father and who became poor that we might become rich. Some of you have been called to the contemplative form of religious life, in which, through prayer and penance as your specific role, you seek an ever more intimate communion with God in charity. In this way you exemplify the Church as the spotless Bride of Christ, and your very lives lived in union with Jesus take on the power of a continuous act of intercession for God's people. Others of you are called to dedicate yourselves with no less zeal to *the various works of the apostolate*. In hospitals and in schools, in parishes and in specialized fields of service, you bear witness to Christ and, together with the laity and the clergy, collaborate in the one mission of the Church. Whatever type of religious life the Lord Jesus has called you to, by reason of your religious consecration you share in his Passion, death and Resurrection in a special way. Jesus said: "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (*Jo. 12, 24*). Religious life, like martyrdom, is a special invitation from God to become this grain of wheat, to trust that *dying in Christ* brings forth abundant fruit and leads to eternal life. Together with all the baptized, but in a fuller way by reason of your religious consecration, you share in our Savior's Cross. As you strive to accept joyfully the daily trials of life and the difficulties inherent in human work and social relationships, be confident that the Cross when embraced out of love for Christ is always a tree of new life. The great charism of religious life is generous love - generous love of Christ and the members of his Body. It is expressed in service and consummated in sacrifice. You are willing to give in proportion as you love, and when love is perfect the sacrifice is complete.⁴ I invite all of you to join me today in expressing gratitude to God and in praising him *for the many vocations to the priesthood and religious life* which have characterized the Church in Korea in recent years. Here is a sign of the *vitality of your faith*; it is likewise a sign of *the power of Christ's Paschal Mystery* and the efficacy of his Precious Blood. Indeed, the Church in your land cannot even be imagined without your vital presence in parishes, schools, hospitals and other specialized fields of apostolic endeavor. And your service offers great hope for the future, not only for the Church in your land but for other countries as well which will receive missionaries from Korea. The universal Church counts on your missionary contribution. I encourage you to pray for more vocations, and to try continually to foster them among the people whom you serve. Ask the Korean Martyrs to intercede for this special intention, which is so important for the future of the Church. And may your lives which are an incarnation of the Beatitudes be eloquent signs of the presence of Jesus Christ in the world.⁵ In a word, dear priests and religious, millions of your brethren in Korea, including countless non-Christians, are speaking to you in those words that were addressed to the Apostle Philip in Jerusalem; "We wish to see Jesus" (*Jo. 12, 21*). Yes, my brothers and sisters, you must *show Jesus* to your people; you must *share Jesus* with your people: the praying Jesus, the Jesus of the Beatitudes, the Jesus who, in you, wishes to be obedient and poor, meek, humble and merciful, pure, peaceful, patient and just. This is the Jesus whom you represent: the eternal Son of the Father who became incarnate in the womb of the Virgin Mary and who wishes to be visible in you. The Jesus of the Paschal Mystery, who, in the power of his Spirit and through the cooperation of his Church, longs to lead all humanity to his Father. This is the *solemn challenge of your lives: show Jesus to the world; share Jesus* with the world. © Copyright 1984 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

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