



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO THE FAR EAST AND MAURITIUS

MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA

*ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II**

*Istana Negara (Presidential Palace), Jakarta
Monday, 9 October 1989*

*Mr President,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,*

1. It is with heartfelt joy and gratitude to Almighty God, the source of all blessings, that I have come to Indonesia. I have looked forward to this opportunity of visiting your country and meeting her people. As the Pope, the Bishop of Rome, I have naturally a special love and concern for my Indonesian brothers and sisters of the Catholic faith, and sense strongly my obligation to support and encourage them in their fidelity to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

But my visit to Indonesia is not directed exclusively to Catholics. *I have come as a friend to all Indonesians*, with a great respect for all the people of this dynamic nation. I assure you of my prayers and best wishes that Indonesia may grow in both material and spiritual prosperity, and that each of her citizens may experience the gift of peace that comes from God.

I wish to express my deep *gratitude to you, Mr President*, for your gracious invitation to visit Indonesia. Your very kind offer to accept lodging at the “*Wisma Negara*”, which I have had to decline most respectfully, given the principally pastoral nature of my visit, has already enabled me to feel the warm hospitality of the Indonesian people. By thanking you, I wish to extend my gratitude to each of your fellow citizens, and to all those who, in any way, have assisted in making this visit possible.

2. Among the nations of the world, Indonesia enjoys a well-merited respect for her approach to the human dimensions of her growth as a nation. The challenges which face your people are indeed formidable. As the largest country in southeast Asia, Indonesia embraces peoples spread far and wide across many thousands of islands. In their great diversity, comprising hundreds of ethnic groups and a wide variety of cultures and languages, *your people themselves constitute the country's richest resource.*

The creation of a unified and interdependent society from such a number of diverse groups stands out as one of Indonesia's great achievements in her forty-four year history as a nation. The philosophy of "*Pancasila*" which has inspired and guided your national growth very fittingly recognizes that the *only firm foundation of national unity is respect for all*: respect for the differing Opinions, connections, customs and values which mark Indonesia's many citizens. At times nations are tempted to disregard fundamental human rights in a misguided search for political unity based on military or economic power alone. But such unity can easily be dissolved. As your national tradition teaches, the most secure basis for lasting unity and development as a nation is a profound respect for human life, for the inalienable rights of the human person, and for the freedom of responsible citizens to determine their destiny as a people.

3. Indonesia's many religious believers have an important role to play in the continuing development of the nation, for belief in God and the spiritual values which unite peoples are powerful forces for good. In this regard, I was pleased to learn of the *contributions which Indonesia's Catholic citizens, from the very beginning of the Republic, have made and are continuing to make towards the advancement of their nation.* Catholics have given notable service to their country's development, particularly in the fields of education, health care and social welfare. Together with their brothers and sisters of other religious traditions, they have sought to cooperate in the task of constructing a society which is in harmony with the hopes and aspirations of all their fellow citizens. Following Catholic principles, they have sought to be of service to all men and women of good will in the pursuit of a just and peaceful social order. This cooperation for the good of society has found visible expression in many fine institutions which are widely held in high regard. We are grateful to the Almighty that this has been possible.

4. Mr President: Indonesia has indeed made remarkable advances towards realizing the goals which find such noble expression in the preamble to your nation's Constitution. As a friend of Indonesia, I pray for the day when the ideals which guide your nation will be fully realized in the life of all her people. In acknowledging the presence of legitimate diversity, in *respecting the human and political rights* of all citizens, and in encouraging the growth of national unity based on tolerance and respect for others, you lay the foundations for that just and peaceful society which all Indonesians wish for themselves and long to bequeath to their children.

I assure you once again of my deep esteem and affection for the people of your country.

Semoga Allah memberkati Indonesia dengan damaiNya. Semoga Allah memberkati anda sekalian.

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