



The Holy See

PASTORAL JOURNEY
TO BENIN, UGANDA AND KHARTOUM (SUDAN)

FAREWELL CEREMONY

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

International Airport of Khartoum (Sudan)

Wednesday, 10 February 1993

*Mister President,
Members of the Government,
My Brother Bishops,
Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Dear Friends,*

1. The moment has come for me to say good-bye to the Sudan at the end of what has been, for me, a most notable visit to Africa.

I wish to thank Your Excellency and all those who have made it possible for me to come among the Catholic community of Khartoum and to celebrate on Sudanese soil the Eucharist, the most solemn rite of our faith. I am grateful to Archbishop Gabriel Zubeir and all the Bishops and faithful of the Church who have shared this moving experience with me. The memory of this day will stay with me forever, and in my heart I share even more deeply the joys and sufferings, the hopes and anxieties of all who are working for true peace and harmony in this vast land.

2. As I leave Africa, I feel the pressing need to turn to God, the Father of all the living, and to implore his protection on the peoples of this continent *at this time of change*. *Yes! Africa* is changing. Not at the same pace everywhere, and not always in the same direction. But it is clear that the peoples of Africa are expressing a new sense of responsibility for their own destiny, and a

desire to find and follow their own model of growth and development. May God assist the leaders of this Continent to discern the most adequate responses to the problems affecting their peoples. May he help them to rise to the challenge of making it possible for their citizens to take a greater part in forging their own brighter future.

I repeat what I said just three weeks ago to the diplomats accredited to the Holy See: "In this new Africa, it is important that the central role should be left to the population, which must be able to participate fully in development. For this purpose, the population needs regional and international cooperation to help to prevent crises on the one hand, and for this cooperation to support the process of democratization as well as economic growth on the other" (John Paul II, *Address to the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See*, 9, 16 January 1993).

3. Africa! You have such great needs, but you also have so much to give! You have a deep sense of community and a vivid sense of the spiritual dimension of human life. Do not be led to think that an exaggerated individualism, which always ends in selfishness, is the right way forward. Maintain the strength of your family life, your love for children, your solidarity with those in need, your hospitality towards the stranger, the positive elements of your social and cultural traditions. Above all, do not exchange your spiritual values for a materialism that cannot satisfy the human heart nor form the basis of a truly just and caring society.

In bidding you farewell, I wish to re-affirm the Catholic Church's continuing commitment to this Continent. The presence of Christianity in some regions goes back to the very dawn of the Christian era. In other places it has arrived more recently. In every case, the Church has been actively involved in educating the young, in caring for the sick, in promoting the human and spiritual development of Africa's peoples. She has done so, not to seek a position for herself, and much less to impose a foreign way of life on Africans. She continues today in her apostolate and good works in order to bear witness to the fundamental hope which sustains her: *the hope that all mankind will grow in unity and reach an ever greater communion with God* (Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 1). The very nature of her mission obliges her to foster cooperation with all men and women of good will in the service of the human family.

Africa! The Church, incarnate in the lives of your own sons and daughters, is determined to share the burden of your problems and the difficulties of your march towards a better future. She will not fail to encourage you in your search for greater justice, for peace and reconciliation, for an economic, social and political development that corresponds to the dignity of man. I urge all the members of the Church to bear clear witness to the Gospel's saving message of hope, and to be faithful to the moral principles which ensure the defence and promotion of human dignity and human rights.

May God abundantly bless the peoples of Africa. May he protect the poor and the defenceless, and show his mercy to the young and old. May his peace reign in the hearts of all.

4. Dear Sudanese Friends, as I leave I express the hope that the path of understanding and dialogue will soon lead to a just and honourable peace for all the inhabitants of this country. I came to Khartoum with friendship and esteem for all the Sudanese people. I depart with the hope that a better relationship between North and South, and between the followers of different religious traditions, will soon be a reality, for it responds to the aspirations of true believers. God bless all those who work for this end. God bless the Sudan!

Manaha Allāh as-

Sūdān barakat as-salām.

(May God grant peace to the Sudan.)