



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC PILGRIMAGE
OF HIS HOLINESS OF PAUL VI
TO WEST ASIA, OCEANIA AND AUSTRALIA

MASS IN ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL

HOMILY OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI

*Australia, Sydney
Monday, 30 November 1970*

«Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ» (2 *Thess.* 1: 2). We make Our own the greeting of the apostle, and We say it to you with all Our heart. We are filled with joy and wonder. It is no dream that We are here, in Australia, in Sydney, among you, for you. Perhaps in all the Church's history we cannot easily find a meeting like this, a greeting like this. We must go back to the most significant moments of ecclesial communion to find an intensity of sentiments and a richness of thought such as fill our minds and hearts in the exchange of this first greeting.

We greet you Our venerable brother, Cardinal Norman Thomas Gilroy, Archbishop of this illustrious and flourishing Church. You are known to Us and dear to Us for many a year. We welcomed you with a great number of Australian pilgrims in Milan, when We were the pastor of that ancient and blessed Church of Saint Ambrose and Saint Charles. Now We are happy to return your visit and to bring you and your beloved Church the blessings of those holy and great bishops and the precious blessings of the Roman apostles, Peter and Paul.

We greet you, most worthy and dear brother bishops of this immense continent, of New Zealand and of Oceania. We greet you, priests, religious and laity of this chosen portion of the Catholic Church. We greet you all, every one. To each and every one of you We give at this moment Our heart, Our good wishes, and Our blessing.

To Our lips come the words of the psalm: «How good, how delightful it is, brothers dwelling in unity» (*Ps.* 132: 1). For We feel that We are surrounded by brothers and sons; We feel that We are among friends, as if our acquaintance were an old and longstanding one. We feel Ourselves no stranger among you, and We are happy to savour in sense and spirit this

union with you. You must know that this is the purpose of Our journey: to experience, consolidate and celebrate in Christ the unity of our Church. This feeling of unity which touches our hearts is something wonderful and singular; it should cause us to relish and meditate upon «the joy of being a Catholic» (Mgr M. Besson). It is a feeling that holds within it an identity of faith, a marvellous harmony of spirit, and 'still more, a communion of charity, indeed a mysterious presence, that of Christ, he in whose name we are gathered here together (Cfr. *Matth.* 18: 20).

We wish joyfully to profit from these days of union with you as a grace from the Lord. We thank you for your welcome, so full of the Christian kindness such as is found in a family, and We bless you every one.