



The Holy See

***RADIO MESSAGE OF PAUL VI
ON THE FOURTH CENTENARY
OF THE EVANGELIZATION OF THE PHILIPPINES***

Sunday, 2 May 1965

Venerable Brothers, beloved sons and daughters,

In Spirit, We are present among you now, as you celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of the evangelization of the Philippines. Those first valiant missionaries undertook a long and perilous voyage to bring you the Faith, for they were driven by the love of Christ, Who said: «Go into the whole world and preach the Gospel» (*Marc. 16, 15*).

Those intrepid pioneers realized the primordial importance of the Faith. You, their spiritual sons, will ever keep that Faith in its integrity, particularly by providing for the solid religious instruction of your children and all your people.

As a great Catholic nation in South-East Asia, you are truly «a city set on a mountain (which) cannot be hidden... A lamp put upon a lampstand, so as to give light to all» (*Math. 14-15*). Consider how great is your responsibility to give good example to those of other faiths, and thus sweetly draw men to the Heart of Jesus, king and center of all hearts. Manifest your gratitude for four centuries of grace by striving to give the best example of Faith, Hope and Love, of all the other Christian virtues, to the entire world, especially the nations nearest to you.

In this, you have been encouraged and instructed by the recent Congress of Catholic Action, which trains new apostles for the religious and social assistance of the people.

The very first act of your religious history was the celebration of Holy Mass on your beloved soil. Conserve and deepen your belief in the Blessed Eucharist, especially during these days of the National Eucharistic Congress with its manifestation of sincere and solemn devotion.

We have raised the Cathedral Church of Cebù to the dignity of Minor Basilica, thus recognizing the four centuries of evangelization preached in this temple, the symbol of the birth and growth of Christianity in the Philippines. You are noted for your love of the Child Jesus, «el Santo Niño». Carry Him always in your hearts, «glorify Him and bear Him in your bodies» (1 Cor. 6, 20); so that His virtues may shine forth in your lives, and give light to all men, «that they may see your good works, and give glory to your Father in Heaven» (Matth. V. 16). Love and honor His Immaculate Mother, Mary, Mother of the Church and our Mother. Thus, indeed, will you make the motto of your centenary come true: The Philippines for Christ!

From a heart filled with paternal affection, We invoke upon you all, the protection, guidance and love of the Holy Child Jesus and of Mary, ever a Virgin. And We lovingly impart to His Excellency the President of the Republic, who has honored these ceremonies by his presence; to the Members of the Government; to the Most Reverend Hierarchy, and in the first place to Our distinguished Cardinal Legate, and to Cardinal Santos, Archbishop of Manila; to the great Catholic Universities, their professors and students; to all the priests, religious, and beloved people of the Philippines, Our special Apostolic Blessing.

Y ahora vamos a expresarnos en la lengua con la que los Misioneros españoles anunciaron por vez primera el evangelio en vuestras Islas.

La posición geográfica y el destino histórico de vuestro País en el Extremo Oriente, el esplendor de vida religiosa de vuestros hogares, estos y tantos otros títulos que podríamos enumerar, constituyen otras tantas llamadas e invitaciones a dar a vuestra sincera profesión católica una creciente expansión misionera. Conocemos el proyecto de Seminario para Misiones Extranjeras con cuya realización el celoso Episcopado Filipino pone broche de oro a este centenario, y Nos con alegría lo bendecimos.

Amadísimos Hijos:

Os hemos enviado, para representarnos en las solemnidades que terminan, como Legado Nuestro, un dignísimo y querido Cardenal. Mas con cuánto gusto hubiéramos querido visitar en esta ocasión vuestro hermoso País, estar personalmente presentes entre vosotros, para alentar vuestros buenos propósitos de fidelidad a Cristo y a su evangelio, para dar con Nuestra presencia un nuevo testimonio del afecto que el Vicario de Cristo profesa a ese gran pueblo lleno de méritos y de promesas. Tened todos la certeza del gran amor con que invocamos sobre cada uno de vosotros las más ricas gracias del Cielo y os otorgamos una amplia y efusiva Bendición Apostólica.

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