



# The Holy See

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

## WELCOME CEREMONY

### *ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI*

*Airport of Djakarta, Indonesia  
Thursday, 3 December 1970*

We are happy that this journey gives Us the occasion to make a stop in this great and beautiful land of Indonesia where none of Our predecessors ever set foot, but where Catholics have been present for more than four hundred years, striving to do good to those around them.

It was in fact in the year 1546 that one of our greatest saints, Francis Xavier, after skirting the coasts of Sumatra and Java, came to fix his residence for a while at Amboina and Ternate, laying the foundation of the future work of his brothers and successors.

In leaving family and country to come here, this servant of God acted not from political ambition. He was not trying to acquire riches by trade or to seek glory or the pleasure of seeing new things and speaking of them to the world. His wish was to do good, the greatest good possible to his fellowmen, because he knew that was what God wished of him.

We Ourselves have no other intention on Our various journeys to all points of the globe. What We try to do with all Our poor strength is to work for the bettering of men's lot, with the aim of bringing about the reign of peace and the triumph of justice, without which no peace is enduring.

As We approached your shores, We were able to admire from above the rich verdant lands of this endless chain of islands which make your beautiful country one of the world's greatest in length. Because of its extent, it is also a country in which many races, cultures and religions live side by

side. All the great religions of the world meet here: Moslem, Buddhist, Hindu, Confucianist and Christian; all of them are recognized as official religions by the country's Constitution, which moreover sets up as one of the five pillars of the country, faith in a «Divine Omnipotence».

We consider it consequently a duty and a joy to praise the Government and people for the fine example thus given to the world of a high religious sense, and of collaboration and reciprocal enrichment in diversity. In fact We have pleasure in repeating here: «We acknowledge with respect the spiritual and moral values of the various non-Christian religions, for we desire to join with them in promoting and defending common ideals in the spheres of religious liberty, human brotherhood teaching and education, social welfare, and civic order» (*Ecclesiam suam*, A.A.S., LVI (1963), p. 655). The Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in religions. «She looks with sincere respect upon those ways of conduct and of life, those rules and teachings which, though differing in many particulars from what she holds and teaches, nevertheless often bring a ray of the Truth that enlightens all men» (*Nostra aetate*, 2).

«Upon the Moslems the Church looks with esteem. They adore one God, living and subsisting in himself, merciful and all-powerful, one who has made heaven and earth and who has spoken to men» (*Ibid.*, 3). She admires those who in Hinduism «seek release from the anguish of our condition through ascetical practices or deep meditation or a loving, trusting flight towards God» (*Ibid.*, 2).

She recognizes that Buddhism «acknowledges the radical insufficiency of this shifting world and that it teaches a path by which men, in a devout and confident spirit, can either reach a state of absolute liberation or attain supreme enlightenment by their own efforts or by higher assistance» (*Nostra aetate*, 2).

It was with these sentiments that We stated: «The Church must enter into dialogue with the world in which it lives. It has something to say, a message to give, a communication to make» (*Ecclesiam suam*, A.A.S., LVI (1964), p. 639).

We are happy to have here beside Us a man of your people and of your blood: Cardinal Darmojuwono, in whose hands is the highest Catholic authority of your country. Besides him there are other bishops born in your country, and an ever-increasing number of priests are preparing themselves to succeed the missionaries. The latter too have generously given up all in order to help your people in every field within their power; they live your life, and have adopted as their own your customs and interests. The best reply that can be given to those who see in the Catholic Church a strictly European organization is this: the Church is catholic, that is to say, universal; in every land she gives the proof of it as you have here before your eyes.

Our appreciative greeting goes to the devoted missionaries scattered throughout your islands. We greet with no less emotion the growing generation of priests and bishops of your own country. As father We give Our blessing to the numerous faithful around Us and to the many more who have

not been able to come. We greet with respect the representatives of all the other religions who have honoured us by their presence. We thank the authorities of the country who made this meeting possible and who have welcomed Us with so much courtesy. Let them rest assured that they will find in all their Christian subjects most devoted helpers for the realization of the noble ideals which they have conceived for the ever greater and ever more rapid progress of Indonesia, which is so generously endowed by God with beauty, and an abundance of resources of every kind.

With all Our heart, We invoke upon all of you the blessing of God, the Almighty.