



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY
TO THE FAR EAST AND MAURITIUS

**HOLY MASS FOR THE FAITHFUL
OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SEMARANG**

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

*Yogyakarta (Indonesia)
Tuesday, 10 October 1989*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Para putera-puteriku yang tarkasih dalam Kristus, khususnya yang berasal dari keuskupan Agung Semarang, keuskupan Purwokerto, Surabaya, Malang, Denpasar, Banjarmasin, Samarinda dan ketapang. Saya ucapkan selamat kepada Bapak Kardinal Darmajuwana yang saya kenal baik sakau Uskup Agung Semarang, Monsignor Julius Darmaatmadja, y para Uskup dan anda Sekalian. Saya sungguh merasa bergembira berada ditengahtengah anda, yang merupakan Gereja muda, hidup dan berkembang.

“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (Io. 1, 14).

Every time we repeat these words we proclaim the Mystery of the Incarnation, by which God became man and entered into our earthly history. The Word who is God, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Son of one being with the Father, “for us men and for our salvation... came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate of the Virgin Mary, *and was made man*”.

The Incarnation took place in a *precise historical setting*. “Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king” (*Matth. 2, 1*). He was forced to flee into Egypt in order to escape the

king's cruelty. After Herod's death he returned with Mary and Joseph to Nazareth, where he lived, until at the age of thirty he began to proclaim the Good News of salvation.

At the same time the Incarnation of the Son of God *holds meaning for every human being* irrespective of time and place. There is an unbreakable bond between man created "in the image of God" (*Gen. 1, 27*) and Christ who took upon himself our human condition, "being born in the likeness of men" (*Phil. 2, 7*). From all eternity he was the exemplary cause of all things, "and without him was not anything made that was made" (*Io. 1, 3*). In the Incarnation, Jesus Christ, "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation" (*Col. 1, 15*), became *the source of a new creation*: "to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God" (*Ibid. 1, 12*). As Saint Paul wrote: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come" (*2Cor. 5, 17*).

To know the exemplar is to have a more perfect knowledge of those made in his image. That is why John teaches that Christ is "the true light that enlightens every man" (*Io. 1, 9*). Christ reveals what is in each one of us. That is why the Second Vatican Council could say that *Christ*, in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father, "*fully reveals man to himself and makes his supreme calling clear*" (*Gaudium et Spes, 22*).

God's closeness to man through the Incarnation is the result of a free act of love on his part. Without this loving closeness humanity would be irretrievably lost. The Word became flesh in order to teach us that God is our Father, and that he is filled with love for his children. But he also came among us to teach us the way to the Father. "*I am the Way*", Jesus said (*Io. 14, 6*). In fact he teaches that there is no way that does not take its value from him. He said to his disciples: "I am the door; if anyone enters by me, he will be saved" (*Ibid. 10, 9*). Furthermore, he gave and continues to give the "power" to walk the path that leads to salvation. As we read in the Prologue of Saint John's Gospel: "grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (*Ibid. 1, 17*). How did they come? *He poured out the Holy Spirit, through whom we have access to the Father* (Cfr. *Eph. 2, 18*). In the heart of each of Christ's faithful followers the Holy Spirit generates grace and teaches the truth. In this way the image of God in us is restored and completed.

The eternal work of the Most Blessed Trinity, brought close in the Incarnation of the Word, continues through time in the life and mission of the Church. There is *a particular time in the history of each people* when the "newness" of life in Christ is announced and the seed of the Kingdom is sown. This is the time of courageous missionaries and often of glorious martyrs. That has been the history of the "*plantatio Ecclesiae*" in your own country and culture. As with the Prophet Jonah in ancient Nineveh, the heralds of the Gospel faced all kinds of difficulties. Together with you, I wish to thank God for the brave and generous missionaries he gave the Church in Indonesia. The memory of the great *Saint Francis Xavier* is for ever linked with the Archipelago. But here *in the heart of Java*, I wish especially to recall the memory of those who laid the foundations of this community which has come together with the Pope in order to praise God.

We remember especially *Father Franciskus van Lith* of the Society of Jesus, who struggled with you for your freedom; *Bishop Kanjeng Albertus Sugijapranata*, who was the first Indonesian-born bishop and is a national hero; and the renowned *Bapak Ignatius Yosef Kasimo Hendrowahyono*.

The glorious history of the “*plantatio Ecclesiae*” in central Java *continues today*. I rejoice with you at the Christian fervour of your families, from which so many vocations to the priesthood and religious life have come; I rejoice at the enthusiasm and commitment of your young people in the practice of their faith. I rejoice at the zeal and dedication of the lay people actively engaged in various apostolates: in education and health-care, in works of charity and assistance to those in need. In this context I wish to offer a special greeting to all the *catechists*:

Wahai para kategis yang terkasih: Dengan penuh pengurbanan dan pengabdian, Anda telah memberikan yang terbaik dari hidup Anda demi berkembangnya Kerajaan Allah di sini. Karya-karya Anda itu merupakan mutumanikam yang indah dan sangat berharga bagi seluruh Geraja. Maka Gereja sangat menghargai karya-karya Anda itu. Karena itu saya dengan ini menyampaikan penghargaan, berkah dan doa khusus bagi Anda dan seluruh keluarga Anda.

To the *priests and religious* I express my deep affection in the Lord and assure them of my prayers. Brothers and sisters: recognize the unique value of your call from Christ. You are his special friends (Cfr. *Io. 15, 15*). Persevere with joy in your vocations! The Christian community, indeed the whole of society, has absolute need of you, not only because of the many activities in the field of religion, education and human development which you inspire and provide, but above all for *what you are as priests and religious*: witnesses to God's saving presence in the midst of his people. May God's grace sustain you always!

The mystery of the Incarnation – “the Word became flesh” – remains for ever the basis of *the link between the Church and the various human cultures* by which the peoples of the world give expression to their native qualities. The development of a culture is, in a sense, a response to God's original command “to fill the earth and subdue it” (*Gen. 1, 28*). The ancient theatre, music and dance of Java embody the concepts and wisdom of a civilization which recognized man's absolute need of God, “One, Supreme and Almighty”, and emphasized the value of living together in peace. Significant is the myth of the *garuda*, the eagle which allows man to fly to a great height where the light from above enables him to grasp the true meaning of things and the deeper dimensions of life and love.

In this promising setting the Gospel seed was sown. In the Bible, evangelization is often referred to in agricultural terms. Saint Paul in fact calls the Christian community “God's field” (*1Cor. 3, 9*). The seed of the word of God is good seed. The ground is properly prepared. It is up to you, the workers whom the Lord of the harvest, the Eternal Father, has sent into his field, to find the way for it to bring forth abundant fruit – like your forefathers who tended the soil carefully and patiently so that they might harvest their rice crops three times a year. Unlike the first evangelizers, you are

not strangers to this culture. You are the sons and daughters of Java. You can carry the Good News to the very heart of your own culture.

At the same time, as *members of the Catholic and universal Church*, you are conscious of the fact that the *Church's role is also to help to enrich every culture*. Through the power of Christ – the Word made flesh – a divine current, so to speak, passes through all nations and cultures. As Saint Paul says to the Philippians in our first reading, Christ is constantly “encouraging” humanity (Cfr. *Phil. 2, 1*) by his example of self-sacrificing love. From his Cross there flows an “incentive of love” (*Ibid. 2, 1*) which banishes selfishness and pride, and encourages openness to all. In this way the example of Christ and the power of his Paschal Mystery penetrate, purify and elevate all culture, every culture. Do not let the seed of the world of God remain fruitless. Do not cease to ask the Almighty to grant increase to what has been sown in humble trust!

In this homeland of Bishop Sugijapranata and of Pak Kasimo, it is helpful to remember that Christian faith must be translated into *service for the good of society*. Alongside these well-known figures, the Church offers the nation the testimony of innumerable honest and dedicated citizens. They too are the harvest of God's field.

Dear brothers and sisters, I urge you: *make selfless love your rule of life*. Let it be the object of our personal and community prayer; let it lead and guide you in your daily contact with family, friends, neighbours and fellow workers, as you share in the mission of the Church and in the public life of your country. Remember that you build up the universal Church when you bring to it the unique riches of Indonesian culture; you build up Indonesia when, working in harmony with all your fellow citizens for the common good, *you bring to it the unique riches of your Catholic faith*.

Christian commitment, however, is not limited to this service to the world. Its main purpose is in the *glory of God* and the salvation of souls. Its moment of greatest intensity is precisely here, in the Eucharist, the celebration of the sacred mysteries of our Redemption. Together we pray: “ May the Lord accept (this) sacrifice... for the praise and glory of his name, for our good, and the good of all his Church ”. In union with Christ we offer to the Father the Church in Yogyakarta and in Java, the entire Church in Indonesia, this whole splendid archipelago and all its peoples, with their hopes and aspirations, their joys and sufferings.

“*You are my praise in the great assembly*”, says the Psalmist (*Ps. 22 (21), 28*). And through this praise which is sung in countless languages throughout the world, all the ends of the earth return to the Lord, all families of the nations worship before him. In this praise sung by all creation, by all earth's peoples and nations, *there resounds today the voice of Indonesia*.

Putera-puteriku yang terkasih: Jadilah terus murid-murid Kristus yang sejati. Doaku selalu mengiringi usaha Anda sekalian di sini. Semoga Tuhan kita Yesus Kristus, selalu melimpahkan rahmatNya kepada Anda sekalian.

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