



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC PILGRIMAGE TO NIGERIA, BENIN

GABON AND EQUATORIAL GUINEA

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE ORGANIZERS OF THE VISIT TO NIGERIA**

Lagos

Monday, 15 February 1982

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

1. Before I leave your shores I am indeed happy to have this meeting with you, representatives of the many who have organized this visit of mine to Nigeria.

For many months you have planned, revised your plans, held meetings in Rome, in Lagos, in your Provincial Centres, on the diocesan levels and at other venues. You have contacted the Government, various organizations, companies and individuals. The result is the beautifully orchestrated and smooth programme which is already in its fourth day.

I express to you my deep appreciation. Your many sacrifices have helped to strengthen faith, to increase charity and to cement friendships. You have contributed much to the life of the Church in Nigeria and to the happiness and well-being of so many of your fellow-citizens.

2. The arrangements you made have enabled me to exercise my own pastoral mission as a servant of Christ's Gospel and as the universal Shepherd of God's people. With your collaboration I have been able here in Nigeria to proclaim Christ, the Light of the world.

3. By working together you have reflected the unity of the Church; you have shown how greatly you value solidarity in action and how much you want to be, like the early Christians, "of one heart and soul". It is my hope that the pattern of collaboration and hard work that you have followed during the preparation of my visit will continue to inspire you in all your activities in your local Churches, and in the continued support that you are asked to give to your bishops and priests.

In the words of Saint Paul: I shall always be "thankful for your partnership in the Gospel... And I am sure that he who

began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Christ Jesus. It is right for me to feel thus about you all, because I hold you in my heart”.

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