



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO KOREA, PAPUA NEW GUINEA,

SOLOMON ISLANDS AND THAILAND **ADDRESS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II**

TO THE BISHOPS OF KOREA Seoul (Korea) - Thursday, 3 May 1984 Dear Brothers in the Episcopate, 1. We are here together to perform an act proper to the Episcopate, *to offer to God the Church in Korea*. We do so through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, "the chief Shepherd" (1 Petr. 5, 4) of the Church and the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls (Cf. *Ibid.* 2, 25). We do so in order to give full meaning to the Bicentennial celebration, to proclaim publicly that the Church belongs to Christ - the Church that he founded on Peter and called his own: "You are Peter and on this rock I will build *my* Church" (Matth. 16, 18). But the Church, dear Brothers, is likewise "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grow into a holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. 2, 20-21). This is a special hour in the history of the Church in Korea. It is an hour for the Bishops as successors of the Apostles to live their apostolic identity in the Church: to proclaim anew the nature of the Church, to assert her priorities, *to manifest and exemplify her holiness*. The celebration of your Bicentennial is centered on the exaltation of your holy ones, your martyrs, your saints. By God's providence three of your predecessors, three of the Bishops of Korea, are inscribed among the hundred and three Martyrs who will be canonized next Sunday. The example of pastoral love and holiness of life given by Bishop Imbert, Bishop Berneux and Bishop Daveluy has special meaning for your own lives today. It is also an encouragement and a solemn challenge to every Korean Bishop who will ever live, to every man whom God will ever call to shepherd his people as a Bishop in this land. Venerable and dear Brothers in our Lord Jesus Christ: before the witness of your Martyrs and all your holy ancestors this is the hour when the Lord Jesus calls you to ever greater holiness of life. 2. It was in holiness of life that your predecessors, together with their priests, religious and laity, consolidated the life of the Church in this peninsula, a Church which yearned for pastoral care, and which the pioneering laity had already generously built up in faith and love. I wish today to pay *a debt of gratitude to the Bishops of Korea*, past and present, for the holiness that you have exemplified, for the holiness which has given birth to zeal, and for the many works of God which zeal has produced. In doing so, I express gratitude, together with you, to the Lord Jesus who reminds us of the principle of all fruitful apostolic activity: "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing" (Jo. 15, 5). In this hour of thanksgiving I am thinking of the sacrifices which zeal has made possible, of the vast amount of service which has been rendered in the name of Christ, of the love which has motivated so many, not only to die for the Faith, but to live and work and suffer so that the revelation of God's word might become the wisdom of your people, and so that the Incarnate Word, Christ himself, might become ever more a light to this land. On behalf of the universal Church I express gratitude through you the Bishops *to the whole Church in Korea for the achievements of two centuries of holiness*, culminating in the zeal with which you are celebrating your Bicentennial. 3. With profound admiration I acknowledge *the present vitality* of your parishes and various movements, the excellent school and hospital services, the many fine parish

buildings and other structures, coupled, above all, with the spiritual fervour, community spirit and missionary zeal of your people. I note with joy your wise Bicentennial Plan, and I willingly bless all your systematic and sustained efforts on behalf of the family, the program of evangelization of neighbour, the building up of the parish and the community, the consolidation of the diocese and finally the ecclesial solidarity on the national and universal level. Yes, in union with the universal Church, you are making a splendid contribution to the growth of the Body of Christ in Korea and throughout the world. And in God's providence, thanks to the mystery of the Communion of Saints, the spiritual dynamism produced by conversion and holiness of life has effects beyond geographical limits and external obstacles. Saint Paul points out to us - and it is forever true: "There is no chaining the word of God" (2 Tim. 2, 9).⁴ As for the future, Brethren, *the holiness of the Church must continue to be the priority of your lives* and the inspiration of all your activities. All the structures of the Church, all the services she renders - which are themselves bound up with the fruitful witness and generosity of your Martyrs - are linked to holiness of life and to that zeal which only holiness can make possible and sustain over a long period of time. The effectiveness of your pastoral leadership depends on the measure of your holiness - your union with the Christ who repeats to you today: "If you abide in me and my words abide in you... it shall be done for you" (Jo. 15, 7). Your Bicentennial brings with it a call to action for the sake of the Gospel. But in the life of the Church every call to action is a call to holiness, to union with God and consequently a call to prayer, which is the very expression of union with God. *Your Bicentennial is a call to prayer throughout Korea.* In prayer you will strengthen faith, the faith that you the Bishops are called to proclaim as *Doctores Fidei*, the faith that leads to justification and to eternal life. Your leadership as pastors of a flock gathered around the one Shepherd, Jesus Christ, will never be more prophetic than in the reassuring, encouraging and contagious example of your holiness of life. There is no greater personal contribution that you can make than to heed the words of Peter and present yourselves as "examples to the flock" (1 Petr. 5, 3). To be examples to the flock means to be holy Bishops, Bishops living in union with Christ, Bishops of prayer. The whole future of your ministry and of the apostolate in Korea, the very growth of the Church, must be placed *under the sign of holiness*. Through union with God and in prayer you will be able to follow the words of Saint Paul: "Draw your strength from the Lord and his mighty power" (Eph. 6, 10).⁵ In union with Christ you will ponder again what *God's word demands of the Church in Korea*. With the courage that comes only with holiness you will accept the full authentic exigencies of the Second Vatican Council for your dioceses. In prayer you will review the perennial teachings of the faith and the ever relevant newness of the Church's immutable dogmas. In vital communion with Christ, the life-giving vine, and in union with the universal Church, you will continue to preach the word of faith which depends on hearing and which enables the People of God to confess with their lips that Jesus is Lord, to believe in their hearts that God raised him from the dead, and to be saved (Cf. Rom. 10, 9)). This faith - which is nourished in your own hearts and proclaimed with the special episcopal charism that is yours - is the source of all the insights of the faithful, who are called to believe and, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to ponder that belief and live it. Reflection in prayer on the nature of the Church as proclaimed by the First and Second Vatican Councils, and the desire to do everything in accordance with the will of Christ for his Church, will confirm you in your commitment to collegiality and to real teamwork, especially in such major issues as *inculturation, reconciliation and sharing*, which are requirements of evangelization and catechesis. In union with Christ, in holiness of life, you will be able ever more effectively to promote justice for the life of the Church and for the society that the Church wishes to serve as a leaven.⁶ In this hour of celebration, which is one of renewal and hope, remember the one stipulation made to Paul himself by the other Apostles: "That we should be mindful of the poor" (Gal. 2, 10). For you this means being a living image of Jesus in his own poverty and servant-hood. In this way you will go out to meet his poor, identify with them, and assist and evangelize them. You are called to show them compassion, to support their efforts to live decent lives, and to walk hand in hand with them down the long road of integral human development and evangelization. Love will make this

possible and zeal will dictate the way. In prayer you will perceive that you must be one with the Christ who fulfills the Scriptures: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach Good News to the poor" (*Luc. 4, 18*). Brethren, you too are anointed and sent to the poor, wherever they may be found. And in serving them, you must give them, together with your very life, the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In all your efforts, dear Brothers, to live your vocation of pastoral leadership in union with Christ, I am close to you with my prayers and fraternal love. And may the prayers of Mary the Mother of Jesus and the intercession of the Martyrs of Korea support you in your Bicentennial hope to be a light to this land! © Copyright 1984 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

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