



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY
TO THE FAR EAST AND MAURITIUS

MEETING WITH Mr ROH TAE WOO
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II*

Blue House, Seoul
Sunday, 8 October 1989

Mr President,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. On the occasion of my second visit to Korea, I wish to express to you my *deep appreciation for the hospitality and consideration with which you have welcomed me. The Forty-fourth International Eucharistic Congress*, held this year in Seoul, is a moment of prayer, of brotherhood and of spiritual unity for all Catholics. I am certain that many thousands of pilgrims will return to their homes grateful to all the people of Korea because of the heartfelt generosity with which you have received them and made them feel at home in this beautiful land.

2. Within the world community, Mr President, the Holy See has long been committed to the search for a just and peaceful international order. My former visit to Korea provided me with an opportunity to observe at first hand *the difficulties and challenges which face the Korean people in their efforts to create a society of justice, peace and prosperity.*

This present visit enables me to note the strong desire of all your people to proceed along the way to full democracy, a prosperous and tranquil civic life, and to generous and fruitful cooperation with the other nations of the world.

As you plan for the future and provide for the present needs of the nation, may you continue to exercise a wise stewardship of both the cultural values bequeathed to you by your ancestors, and of the natural resources which God has destined for the use of future generations of Koreans.

In a nation which has to face difficult, even painful, decisions in many areas of public life, and which still bears the scars of division and conflict, you are confronted with the challenge of seeking *peaceful and just pathways towards a national life and reunification based on authentic justice, freedom and inalienable human rights*. May your efforts to secure these goals be blessed by God and bear rich fruit for Korea and all its people.

3. More than ever, the future of Korea will depend upon the presence among its people of many wise, virtuous and deeply spiritual men and women. Concern for Korea's future must unite all of its citizens: young and old, rich and poor, students and workers, members of government and civil service. In this regard, Mr President, I am pleased to know that there are numerous Catholics who are associated with you in the work of governing this nation. The presence of these able men and women among your Ministers, within Parliament, and in the civil and military services, is an indication of *the active contribution that Korea's Catholic community is making to the life of the country*. Together with their fellow citizens of other faiths, Korea's Catholics may be counted on to offer their varied gifts for the common good.

4. Finally, Mr President, conscious of the many and weighty concerns which press daily upon you and all those who work for the well-being of Korea, I assure you of *my own prayers and good wishes*. Like a seed, which is planted in fertile ground and cultivated with great patience and care, may the yearnings for peace and unity which lie deep in the Korean heart come to blossom in this great land. May all Koreans work together, hand in hand, to build a society worthy of your ancient traditions, of the expectations of your children and of your children's children.

God bless all of you and guide you in the ways of his peace!

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