



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO KOREA, PAPUA NEW GUINEA,
SOLOMON ISLANDS AND THAILAND **ADDRESS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO THE SPIRITUAL LEADERS
OF OTHER NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS**

Chapel of the Nunciature of Seoul (Korea)

Sunday, 6 May 1984

Dear Friends,

in preparing to come to Korea I looked forward with particular expectation to this meeting with you, spiritual leaders in this venerable land.

You are aware that the chief reason for my visit is the responsibility that has been entrusted to me of guiding and confirming the faith of the followers of Jesus Christ who are members of the Catholic Church. But I wanted also to express to you *my high esteem* of the millennia of precious cultural heritage and admirable traditions of which you are the guardians and living witnesses. Thank you for giving me this opportunity by your presence today.

1. The Catholic Church is endeavouring to engage in *friendly dialogue* with all the great religions that have guided mankind throughout history. This we shall continue to do, so that our mutual understanding and collaboration may increase, and so that the spiritual and moral values we uphold may continue to offer wisdom and inner strength to the men and women of our time.

In fact, religions today have a more than ever *vital role to play* in a society in rapid evolution such as Korea. In a sense, just as the individual must find his true self by transcending himself and strive to achieve harmony with the universe and with others, so too must a society, a culture, the community of human beings, seek to foster the spiritual values that are its soul. And this imperative is all the more urgent, the deeper the changes that affect life today.

2. In this regard, the world looks to Korea with particular interest. For the Korean people throughout history have sought, in the great ethical and religious visions of *Buddhism and Confucianism*, the path to the renewal of self and to the consolidation of the whole people in virtue and in nobility of purpose. The profound reverence for life and nature, the

quest for truth and harmony, self-abnegation and compassion, the ceaseless striving to transcend - these are among the noble hallmarks of your spiritual tradition that have led, and will continue to lead, the nation and the people through turbulent times to the haven of peace.

Our diversity in religious and ethical beliefs calls upon all of us to foster genuine *fraternal dialogue* and to give special consideration to what human beings have in common and to what promotes fellowship among them (Cf. *Nostra Aetate*,

1). Such concerted effort will certainly create a climate of peace in which justice and compassion can flourish.

3. We Catholics have just celebrated the Jubilee Year of the Redemption. In that period of grace we have endeavoured to live *the gift of reconciliation* granted us in Christ and have made efforts to reconcile ourselves with God and with our fellow man. Would it not be a good thing indeed, if also between believers of different traditions and between religions themselves a similar meeting of minds and hearts could be realized by our common good will and our duty to serve the human family's well-being?

When the Catholic Church proclaims Jesus Christ and enters into dialogue with believers of other religions, she does so in order to bear witness to his love for all people of all times - a love that was manifested on the Cross for the reconciliation and salvation of the world. It is in this spirit that the Church seeks to promote *deeper fellowship* with all peoples and religions.

4. May I address a particular greeting to the members of the Buddhist tradition as they prepare to celebrate the festivity of the Coming of the Lord Buddha? May your rejoicing be complete and your joy fulfilled.

I renew to you my sincere sentiments of esteem and good will. May we all be enlightened for the wise accomplishment of the grave responsibilities that are ours. Thank you.

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