



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO KOREA, PAPUA NEW GUINEA,
SOLOMON ISLANDS AND THAILAND

FAREWELL CEREMONY

ADDRESS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II

Henderson Airport - Honiara (Solomon Islands)

Wednesday, 9 May 1984

Dear Friends,

1. As this day all too quickly draws to a close, I wish that I could remain with you longer. But other duties beckon me onward, and I must take my leave. Before departing, however, I wish to express my heartfelt thanks for your *warm welcome and cordial hospitality*. This has been a day truly blessed by the Lord. These hours among you, so rich and full, have given me the opportunity of meeting many different groups of people, including the sick and those in prison, for whom the Church, like her Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, shows a particular love and concern.

It has been my great joy to *celebrate the Eucharist* with the members of the Catholic Church and to proclaim the Gospel in your midst. Together we have given thanks to our heavenly Father for the work of evangelization which has been carried out in this land, and for the way the Christian faith has taken deep root in your hearts.

2. I wish to extend a *special word of gratitude* to all those who have prepared and organized this unforgettable visit so well. In particular, I thank His Excellency the Governor-General and the Government authorities and civic officials. To all who have provided security and good public order I am also most appreciative. A warm word of thanks goes to my brother Bishops in this country, as well as to their many collaborators who worked so hard to prepare for this historic occasion and to make it a privileged moment of grace for us all.

3. This young nation derives its name, I am told, from King Solomon, a man who was known for

his wisdom and learning. Men and women from far and wide would come to King Solomon in Jerusalem, in those days, to seek his counsel and to profit from his insights. Today the Pope from Rome has come to Solomon Islands, wishing to make *a pastoral visit* and to learn from those who live here. And indeed, I have been enriched by being among you. I have profited from *your wisdom which is embodied in your rich cultural heritage* and expressed in your friendliness and warmth. As I leave, I make the words of Saint Paul my own: "Lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called... eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (*Eph. 4, 1. 3.*).

May your families be blessed with the wisdom and peace of the Lord.

God bless Solomon Islands!

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