



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC PILGRIMAGE TO COLOMBIA

FAREWELL CEREMONY

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

International Airport of Hewanorra - Saint Lucia Island

Monday, 7 July 1986

*Mr Prime Minister,
Archbishop Felix,
distinguished members of the Government,
dear people of Saint Lucia,*

THE MOMENT has come for me to conclude my pastoral visit to your beautiful land, a visit which, in the name of God, I have had the great joy of making in answer to the kind invitation I received, and in keeping with my own great desire of meeting with my dear brothers and sisters of Saint Lucia.

In the various meetings I have had, particularly in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, I have been able to carry out the divine command which I, as Successor of St Peter, have received from the Lord, namely, to confirm my brothers in the faith.

My short but rich stay among you has been indeed an occasion of great grace for me, as I hope it has been for all of you. I shall cherish the memory of this visit highly in my heart, and will give expression to that memory in my daily prayer

I am indeed grateful to Almighty God for having given me the opportunity of meeting with the Church in Saint Lucia, a Church truly full of vitality and generosity, a Church united in the bond of charity, bringing to fruition the great hope expressed some one-and-a-half centuries ago by Archbishop Richard Smith when he said: "There is a glorious future for the Church in Saint Lucia".

I am very happy to have been with you, to have walked among you, and to have seen you face to face. I truly appreciated your warm hospitality and cordial welcome. You have opened wide to me your homes and your hearts, and now, as I come to say goodbye, I wish to leave with you all the same exhortations which I made to the people of the whole world at the beginning of my Pontificate: "Throw open your doors to Christ! Do not be afraid! Accept his message in your lives! Make room for him in your hearts!".

Men and women of Saint Lucia, be living witnesses in your daily lives to the Good News of salvation. And remember this: the Lord is never outdone in generosity.

I wish to express my deep gratitude to the authorities of Saint Lucia for the many expressions of kindness and courtesy which they have shown me during this short but intense pastoral visit. I pray to the Lord to bless and sustain them in their efforts to ensure for the country a bright future in peace, justice and well-being, both spiritual and material.

In a special way I thank all those who have worked so hard to make this visit possible. My gratitude goes to the pastor of this Archdiocese, to the priests, the religious men and women, and to all those who are engaged in pastoral activity. Thank you for your generous dedication in service to your brothers and sisters, and particularly in your pastoral concern for the poor, the sick and the abandoned. May the Lord reward you all abundantly.

And now, as I prepare to leave you, my mind turns to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ and Mother of the Church. May she take you all under her maternal protection and may she guide you to an even closer and more personal relationship with her Son, Jesus.

I invoke upon you all, dearly beloved people of Saint Lucia, the copious blessings of Almighty God, as I bless you with my Apostolic Blessing.

God bless the country of Saint Lucia. God bless you all. Thank you.

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