



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY
TO MADAGASCAR, LA RÉUNION,
ZAMBIA AND MALAWI

FAREWELL CEREMONY FROM MALAWI

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

Chileka Airport, Blantyre
Saturday, 6 May 1989

Your Excellency, President Banda,
Distinguished Members of the Government of Malawi,
Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. As I leave Blantyre, I wish to express my deep gratitude to you, Mr President, and to all the civil and religious authorities of Malawi. I sincerely thank you for your invitation to spend this time with you.

On this last day of my visit to your lovely country, my thoughts turn to all the people of Malawi who have welcomed me *as a friend and brother*. I am grateful to all those who have worked so hard to make this visit possible. My thanks go to all men and women of good will – those whom I have been able to greet personally and those who have been close to me through the radio and the press. Your hospitality has been warm and filled with love. It has been truly African!

2. I came as a Brother in Christ, *a pilgrim to God's people in Malawi*. I thank you for opening your hearts to hear the message of Christ's love and for your desire to make that message a reality for all the world to see. I thank the bishops, priests, religious and seminarians for our meetings. I was happy to spend time with the young people, who are a sure beacon of hope for the future of this

land; with the laity, who have such an important role to play in the life of the Church and society; and with the other Christians and members of other faiths, who took part in the various events of this visit. I have yet to perform the final act of my visit – the celebration of Mass in Lilongwe, the new capital of Malawi. For all these opportunities of listening, learning, sharing and praying, I express my lasting thanks.

It has been a great joy to witness the grace of God at work in the people of this land. The beautiful ceremonies and the wonderful spirit of celebration that accompanied them are special memories for me. I will treasure them. The Church in Malawi, like Malawi itself, is *young and vigorous*. She is eager to do great things for Christ and for the whole human family. May she be ever so!

3. I firmly believe in the goodness inherent in every human being, and so I preach respect and dignity for all, wherever I go. I believe in the message of conversion and life that I have held up to you. *Be converted and live!* This has been the theme of my visit. I believe in the truth and love that spring from conversion and lead to peace. Today, I am happy to say: *I believe in the people of Malawi* – in your ability to face the problems that beset your country, and to overcome them with courage and hope.

We have celebrated our unity in faith and love. May that faith and love grow stronger – may they be expressed in greater understanding, mutual respect, and above all in charity towards others.

People of Malawi: go forward with courage!

Accept the challenge of Christian love and service.

May Almighty God abundantly bless your beautiful country, its people and its future.

God bless Malawi!