



The Holy See

***RADIOMESSAGGIO DI SUA SANTITÀ PIO PP. XII
AL PRIMO CONGRESSO EUCHARISTICO DELLA COSTA D'AVORIO****

Domenica, 25 febbraio 1951

Venerable Brothers and dearly beloved of Africa, Our heart fills with an unwonted joy as We reflect that Our voice is reaching the tens of thousands of Our devoted children of the Gold Coast gathered together for the first Eucharistic Congress of that region, presided over by Our worthy Legate. Science forges a new link that unites the tomb of the chief of the apostles with your own St. Peter's that rises beautiful and majestic in historic Kumasi.

More than beautiful, your cathedral is eloquent; and what a thrilling story it tells of God's incessant love, of missionary zeal undaunted and unquenchable, from the days when the first members of the Society of African Missions prepared the field for the erection of a Vicariate Apostolic just fifty years ago to the ever memorable year of jubilee, when it was Our privilege and consolation to erect the Hierarchy of British West Africa. Heroes in the faith have made possible the Congress of today. The Redeemer of the world hanging on the cross of Golgotha claimed your service and your souls; and aroused by this divine love brave priests and intrepid virgins consecrated to God went out from Europe to bring the glad tidings of salvation to the Gold Coast. All too brief was the calendar of their missionary life; yet others came to take their place and for many years they too followed to an early grave. Today from heaven their spirits join you in your paeon of praise and thanks giving to the God of all nations who has enriched you with the priceless gift of faith and hope of eternal life.

Oh that faith, beloved children, it is that faith that links you most closely and unbreakably with the See of Peter and the Vicar of Christ on earth. It is the faith first preached by the apostles who were chosen by the divine Master Himself; it is the faith that Cyprian and Augustine defended, undying luminaries of Catholic Africa; for that faith the martyrs died in the Roman arena and on the pyre of Uganda; its credo, one and the same, re-echoes beneath the vaulted ceilings of the central basilica here of Catholicity, fills the vast spaces of your cathedral and is heard no less clearly

though in softer accents in the poorest village chapel. Today you are professing your faith especially in the Holy Eucharist, — sacrament most holy, sacrament divine — and you offer it the homage of your adoration. As the Sacred Host is raised on high in Mass or lifted aloft in jewelled ostensorium to bless you, your hearts cry out with the apostle Thomas: my Lord, my God; and you know that your act of faith is shared by all the Catholics throughout the world.

But when you receive Holy Communion and the Lamb of God becomes the food of your soul, oh then is union made perfect. « Is not the bread we break a participation in Christ's Body? » St. Paul writes (*1 Cor.* 10, 16). « Though we are many in number, we are one bread, one body, for the same bread is shared by all »; and « the effect of partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ is none other than to be transformed into Him whom we receive » (*St. Leo Magn., Sem. 63 - Migne P. L. t. 54, col. 357*). « He is one, we are many; He is one and we are one in Him » (*S. August., In Ps. 88 - Migne P. L. t. 37 col. 1124*). « We are one because Christ is one and we are his members » (*S. Aug. In Ps. 60 - Migne P. L. t. 36 col. 724*). « Do not say that He is one and we are many, but say that though we are many, we are one in Him, who is one » (*S. Aug. In Ps. 127 - Migne P. L. t. 37 col. 1679*). That is what the Catholics of Africa heard from their most illustrious teacher St. Augustine more than fifteen centuries ago, and his words come down to you with meaning unchanged, because they express eternal truth.

Dearly beloved children, you are hoping and praying that the Eucharistic Congress, sponsored with such apostolic zeal and wisdom by your revered archbishop, may bring many blessings to the Gold Coast and its people. We pray that your hope may be realised, and We like to contemplate the Church of British West Africa moving forward from the never-to-be forgotten festivities of this Eucharistic week as a compact body, conscious of their mutual union in Christ Jesus, obedient under the spiritual guidance of their bishops, ready and eager to make their full contribution to the development, prosperity and peace of their dear country.

Through wise administration directed by the gracious rule of his Majesty King George, and the generous, loyal cooperation of Nana Asantahene, your country has gained an enviable maturity and is now entering upon a new era of its political life. It will need the enlightened and unselfish civic devotion of all its citizens, if it is to reach the goal, alone worthy of it, of social justice for all classes, defence of family life and progress in educational facilities that will fit and inspire the rising generations to serve their God and their country with pride and unswerving fidelity. We are sure that the Catholics of the Gold Coast will be second to none in furthering realization of these noble aims.

Assuring you, Venerable Brothers, the right honourable civil authorities and Our dear Catholics of the Gold Coast of Our deep interest in the welfare of the peoples of British West Africa, with fatherly affection We impart to all present and to all who have taken part in any of the ceremonies of the Eucharistic Congress Our Apostolic Blessing.

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