



The Holy See

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO THE BISHOPS OF INDIA AND REPRESENTATIVES OF ROMAN DICASTERIES MEETING AT THE VATICAN

*To my Venerable Brother Bishops from India
and Representatives of Roman Dicasteries
meeting at the Vatican*

I am deeply grateful to you all for your kind message, and for the prayers which you are offering for my speedy return to health. Gathered as you are to discuss important aspects of the life of the Church in India, I would have very much liked to meet you personally in order to strengthen that "community of effort" which unites us in "the great duty of spreading the Christian name" (*Lumen Gentium*, 23). I am pleased to have this opportunity to express to each of you my profound appreciation of your pastoral zeal for the work of evangelization.

In this important meeting you have together considered the current state of theology in India, in particular with regard to its doctrinal and pastoral implications, affirming without hesitation the permanent value of the word of God as interpreted in the light of tradition and the Magisterium of the Church, and always with due sensitivity to the particular genius of your peoples. I am pleased that you have chosen the means of fraternal and collegial dialogue in your common effort to understand these questions more deeply; the choice of this method has allowed you to reaffirm the fundamental principles which I had occasion to recall in the Encyclical Letter "*Redemptoris Missio*" and which have recently been elaborated by the International Theological Commission in its document "Christianity and the other Religions".

In a particular way, your meeting has underlined the absolute character of Christian Revelation, always with the proper respect for the values present in other religions. Your assembly has rightly emphasized the permanent value of the Christology of the New Testament, the unity of the mystery of Christ, the uniqueness and universality of his mediation, as well as the salvific role of the Church as sacrament and instrument of salvation. At the approach of the Third Christian Millennium, it is to the very heart of the Christian message that the Church's attention must be directed.

In conclusion, I place my confidence in your responsibility as Pastors and Teachers of the faith, so that these principles may always be the necessary point of reference in deepening the understanding of the faith, as well as the process of its inculturation. It is this important task which theologians, under your guidance and in dialogue with you, are called to render to the Church, so that the truth of Christianity may be transmitted to your people.

This is the prayer which I make for you, and for your brother Bishops and priests throughout India. May Christ the High Priest keep you close to himself and sustain you in the great mission to which he has sent you. As a pledge of joy and peace in the abiding love of the Father I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 23 October 1996.

IOANNES PAULUS PP. II

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