



The Holy See

*ADDRESS OF PAUL VI TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA**

Saturday,, 25 November 1972

Mr. President,

We are honoured by the visit you are paying us today, in the first place because we receive in you the high representative of a people very dear to us, as is the people of Indonesia; and because your presence brings back to our memory, in all its freshness, the meetings we had with you and your fellow countrymen, on a bright and sunny day of our journey to the Far East, on 34 December 1970. We are now offered the welcome possibility of receiving you in our home, as you already had to welcome us in yours, and to return that very kind and cordial welcome that Indonesia offered us on that occasion.

You are about to return to your country after a long tour through Europe. With our best wishes for the successful outcome of these numerous meetings, we are pleased to assure you that we are following with keen interest the efforts being made in your country to increase civil and social progress, and to promote its interests at home and abroad. We like to point out how Indonesia, like many other nations in the Southern Hemisphere, is engaged in a vast programme of wider participation in the international economy. We cannot but encourage these aims. We have spoken on many occasions of the necessity of establishing deeper justice on the plane of the relations between the nations, stressing in particular in the Apostolic Letter *Octogesima Adveniens* that "in world trade, it is necessary to overcome relations of force to arrive at agreements planned with a view to the good of everyone" (n. 43). We hope, therefore, that the efforts aimed at promoting a growing development of your country will be crowned by the success they deserve.

We know, too, that the longing for peace is a characteristic that greatly honours the peoples of your noble country, not only within the borders that make up the vast Archipelago, but also beyond them, towards the horizon of the whole tormented region of South East Asia. We wish to

congratulate you sincerely also on what has been accomplished so far, and is being done, to spread and support the inestimable boon of peace in the world.

On the occasion we mentioned of our journey to the Far East and to Oceania, we expressed our conviction regarding the importance of Asia, manifesting deep concern for the destiny, the prosperity and the progress of its immense and hardworking peoples. One of our greatest cares has been to encourage the Church, which spreads its branches even to those immense, mysterious continents, to collaborate in this development concretely and to the utmost extent of its possibilities, limited though they are. The Catholic Church, which has an essentially spiritual mission, aiming at the proclamation and implementation of the message of salvation, also makes an effective contribution in the social order, both in the field of education and in that of medical and hospital assistance, a contribution that stems directly from her commitment for the elevation of man. As our brother Bishops in Indonesia have declared, while it is true that Christ did not give his Church a specific task in the social field, because hers is expressly religious, from this task, however, are born light and strength which stimulate commitment for the good of one's country, seeking the betterment of the whole national community.

We are happy, therefore, to repeat in this connection what we said to the Catholics of Djakarta; that is, that the Church is present to serve, everywhere and always; but not as an alien, because she is Asian among the Asians, Indonesian among the Indonesians, and that there is, therefore, no reason for a Catholic to have to change his honest traditional customs or to love his native land less than his fellow countrymen. On the contrary, he will have to be in the front lines, to exert himself, sparing no effort, precisely because of his faith, which makes him feel directly responsible for the fate of his own brothers, for love of God and Christ Jesus.

Allow us furthermore to express our deep appreciation for the freedom that the Republic of Indonesia has always granted its inhabitants to follow their own religious creed. This attitude of openness, the fruit of the five great principles – the five Pillars – on which the Constitution is based, is itself derived from the religious tradition of the nation; and we are confident that this tradition will always offer fertile ground from which the tree of peace and prosperity may grow, recalling also that the destiny marked out for men by God goes far beyond the frontiers of the earthly world.

With this wish we ask God to bless you, Mr. President, your wife, and the whole population of the splendid Indonesian land, to whom we extend our greeting and our most affectionate wishes.

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