



The Holy See

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO THE SUDANESE FAITHFUL OF THE DIOCESES OF

TORIT, TOMBURA-YAMBIO AND RUMBEEK *To all the Catholic faithful of the Dioceses*

of Torit, Tombura-Yambio and Rumbek greet you all in the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, and I gladly entrust to my Representative in Sudan, Archbishop Erwin Josef Ender, this message which he will personally deliver to you as a sign of my constant concern and affection. When I stopped in Khartoum in February 1993, it was my ardent wish to come to you but, unfortunately, circumstances did not allow it. Nevertheless, I have remembered you every day in my prayers. I remember you, the Bishops, who have the difficult mission of guiding the faithful in a particularly trying social and political situation; the priests and the men and women religious who, with a self-giving generosity that brings honour to the Church, share the daily trials of their brothers and sisters; and all of you, the Catholics of Southern Sudan who witness to your faith in the midst of adversity and even of persecution. The words of St Paul to the Thessalonians come spontaneously to mind: "We give thanks to God always for you ... remembering before our God ... your work of faith and labour of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 1:2-3). The Lord grants you to accomplish great things, even if they seem to be hidden to the eyes of the world. In the midst of violence of every kind, you still know how to love and to bring relief to one another. When discrimination and injustice afflict you, you know how to persevere in faith and in communion with the Church, the Body of Christ. When all appears to have failed, you know how to give signs of goodness and solidarity, which make it possible to say that a better tomorrow can be prepared. I urge you to remain united around your Bishops, and never to give in to despair. Each Christian and each local Church is called to be one with the Paschal Mystery of the Lord's death and Resurrection. To pass from death to life, to accept trials which purify and help us to live what is truly essential: that is the Gospel message, which we live in the certainty given to us by Jesus himself: "Be brave, I have conquered the world" (Jn. 16:33). With these sentiments I wish to strengthen and encourage you, so that you may never lack the hope and trust you need to carry on. I entrust you all to the intercession of Bl. Josephine Bakhita and Bl. Daniel Comboni, the heavenly patrons of your communities. I wish to assure you of the prayerful solidarity of the whole Church, as well as the Holy See's unflinching efforts to draw the attention of the international community to your tragic situation. Know that the Successor of Peter is close to you and implores God for you, that you may have the strength to go forward "rooted and built on Jesus Christ" (cf. Col. 2:7). As a pledge of reconciliation and peace I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing. *From*

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