



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PILGRIMS WHO HAD COME TO ROME
FOR THE BEATIFICATION OF THE HOLY MARTYRS OF THAILAND**

Monday, 23 October 1989

*Your Eminence,
Brothers and Sisters from Thailand,*

The beatification of the holy Martyrs of Thailand offers us this opportunity to meet and to share the joy which fills the hearts of all Thai Catholics on seeing Blessed Philip Siphong and his companions solemnly proclaimed before the entire Church as faithful witnesses to Christ. They were found worthy to be honoured among the men and women who have given the highest testimony of faith, the testimony of their lives!

Your presence in this City of Rome allows you to renew your own faith at the tomb of the Apostle Peter, to whom the Lord entrusted a universal service to the faith and unity of all Christ's followers. The faith in Christ that Peter expressed at Caesarea Philippi: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (*Matth.* 16, 16) is the same that the Thai Martyrs confessed in the sacrifice of their lives. It is the same faith to which we are all called through the grace of Baptism and our Confirmation in the Holy Spirit. I am certain that in Saint Peter's Basilica you have prayed that the seed of faith which was so deeply rooted in the lives of your Martyrs will blossom into an ever greater maturity in Christ (Cfr. *Col.* 4, 12).

I recall that on the occasion of my visit to your country in 1984, while speaking to the Catholic community gathered in the national Stadium, I underlined the fact that "you may form a small part of the population of your country and be *a small flock of Christ's followers*, but Christ the Good Shepherd cares for you and watches over you with a special love" (Ioannis Pauli PP. II *Homilia Bancokii, ad Christifideles congregatos habita, 1, die 10 maii 1984: Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, VII, 1* [1984] 1356). I pray that the Church in Thailand will grow each day in this conviction

and that the love of the Good Shepherd will sustain you in joyfully and actively building up your families and society in goodness and mutual service. There is no better way to honour your Martyrs than to follow their example of humble trust in God and obedience to his will manifested in your Christian calling.

May Mary, the Mother of the Church, to whom the Catholics of Thailand are deeply devoted, intercede for you and guide you in your following of her Son. May the prayers and example of Blessed Philip, of Blessed Agnes Phila and Lucy Khambang and their companions be a great source of spiritual strength for you all.

Through you I send my cordial greetings to your families and friends, and to the wonderful Thai people. Invoking divine protection upon you, I gladly impart the Apostolic Blessing.

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