



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO THE PHILIPPINES,
PAPUA NEW GUINEA, AUSTRALIA AND SRI LANKA

FAREWELL CEREMONY

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

Kingsford-Smith Airport of Sydney (Australia)

Friday, 20 January 1995

Dear Friends,

Dear People of Australia,

1. As I say goodbye to your fair land, I heartily thank everyone for the hospitality which has been extended to me at each moment of this short stay. With your warmth, cordiality and enthusiasm, you have confirmed my belief that the people of Australia remain the greatest of the gifts in which your nation abounds!

I am especially grateful to the Governor-General, the Prime Minister and all the civil authorities for their courteous help in making this visit possible. To those who have arranged the security, to those in the communications media who have provided coverage of this memorable event and, particularly, to Cardinal Clancy and my Brother Bishops and the many thousands of men and women who have cooperated in the preparations for these past two days – to all of you I express my sincere thanks.

2. Among the vivid memories I will take away with me is that of a great and holy woman – Mary MacKillop, the first Australian officially declared by the Church to be among the Blessed. God took this daughter of your land and made her a sign of spiritual greatness, a model of personal holiness and of service to the common good, to be contemplated and admired by all peoples, not only in Australia but throughout the world. Mother Mary's life speaks eloquently because it was firmly

anchored in something which every human heart longs for: inner peace, that peace which comes from *knowing that one is loved by God, and from the desire to respond to his love* (cf. John Paul II, *Message for the World Day of Peace 1995*, 5). This is the simple yet profound lesson of Blessed Mary MacKillop. She knew that God loved her and she did not doubt; freely and unassumingly she responded to this love with confidence and courage. In facing every obstacle, in turning no one away, in the compassion and understanding she showed towards all, she was able to inspire this same inner peace and strength in others.

3. To all Australians I make this appeal: do not hesitate to tap your spiritual resources in order to *renew your families and the whole of society!* Use your rich multi-cultural diversity to foster ever greater mutual esteem and enrichment among yourselves! Recognize that your love of freedom and justice will come to nothing if you do not strengthen respect for the sacredness of life and the human dignity of every person, created in God's image and likeness (cf. Gen. 1:26-27)!

Meeting so many of you over these past two days I have been forcefully reminded of the greatness of your Country and the abundance of your blessings. Your advantages and resources put you in a position of *responsibility in Oceania and the Pacific Region, and towards the vast and quickly developing continent of Asia*. With God's help, you must continue to work with others to advance the cause of peace, foster integral human development and relieve, as far as possible, the oppression of poverty, hunger and disease.

4. Dear People of Australia: I say farewell with great confidence in your future. When next you hear the strains of your National Anthem and sing the words, "our land abounds in Nature's gifts of beauty rich and rare", *give heartfelt thanks to God for his many blessings*. Thank him for the freedom you enjoy, freedom to choose what is good and right. Thank him for your families, for your children who are the sure promise of a better tomorrow. Treat the poor and needy among you with real concern and practical solidarity. Think of Mother Mary MacKillop and learn from her to be a gift of love and compassion for one another, for all Australians, and for the world.

May God protect your beloved country!

Advance, Australia Fair!