



**P R I M E
M I N I S T E R**

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT OF THE DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE,
DR RUI MARIA DE ARAÚJO,
ON THE 3RD ANNIVERSARY OF THE PONTIFICATE
OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS**

**John Paul II Centre, Dili
17 March 2016**

Your Excellency Monsignor Joseph Marino, Apostolic Nuncio to Timor-Leste
Your Excellency Bishop Basílio do Nascimento, Bishop of Baucau and President of the
Episcopal Conference of Timor-Leste
Your Excellency Bishop Norberto do Amaral, Bishop of Maliana and Vice President of
the Episcopal Conference of Timor-Leste
Your Excellency Monsignor Ionut Paul Strejac, Vatican's Charge d'Affaires in Timor-
Leste
Your Excellency Father Virgílio do Carmo da Silva, Bishop-Designate of Dili
Most Reverend Fathers and Reverend Mothers

Members of Parliament and Members of Government
Representatives from the Diplomatic Corps
Representatives from the Churches and the Civil Society

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to start by thanking you for the great honour of inviting me to take part in the celebration of the 3rd anniversary of the pontificate of His Holiness Pope Francis and to say a few words at this ceremony.

My first words also go out to His Holiness Pope Francis, to whom the people of Timor-Leste would like to convey their heartfelt congratulations for the third year of his papacy. The people of Timor-Leste also want to wish a long life to Pope Francis.

On 13 March 2013, Cardinal Cardeal Jorge Mário Bergoglio was made Bishop of Rome. Three years later, there is no one who does not know and talk about "Pope Francis".

I would like to invite you to reflect for a moment on the gestures, words and deeds of Pope Francis.

His Holiness started by taking the name "Francis" after Saint Francis of Assisi, known as the protector of the poor and the sick as well as the patron saint of the animals and nature. From the very start he adopted a simple and modest way of life, which would become a symbol of his pontificate.

It was easy for the world to see that Pope Francis is a deeply humble, benevolent and compassionate man, whose humanistic nature and perception as an "ordinary" human being shine through. He is permanently in touch with the concerns affecting both the people and the world.

The creation of this common identity relationship brought people even closer together and created more unity between everyone, while dismantling barriers and building paths for reducing distances between one group and another. Perhaps the first changes we witnessed are related to the perception we have of humanity as a whole.

In only three years His Holiness has already visited over twenty countries across the five continents, showing both his willingness to be in touch with the people promoting

and encouraging peace as well as unity therefore bringing an end to precariousness, insecurity and social crises.

His presence in the international arena has enabled the construction of bridges that seemed impossible before. His focus on developing ecumenical relations has brought Christians from different denominations together, which constitutes an important sign to world peace.

His words, both during his communications and encyclical letters, provide reflections on the direction of human actions, refocusing them around ethics and the knowledge of principles and values such as peace and justice. These principles and values are therefore renewed in a simple and powerful manner, showing that the goal of politics should be to govern in favour of the common good.

Throughout his various public addresses, His Holiness has pleaded the leaders of all countries to use their power in the best possible way. He has also made constant appeals regarding social inequalities such as poverty and discrimination, as well as regarding social justice and climate changes.

In his last encyclical letter on “Care for our Common Home”, Pope Francis urges the world to treat issues related with nature in a more serious and conscious manner, so that we stop using nature irresponsibly. Pope Francis shows how environmental protection is very closely linked to the resolution of the serious poverty problems faced by humanity.

Climate change is also the result of human activity, which is why it is urgent for the Governments to take steps to minimise the poverty affecting the fundamental rights of a considerable part of the world’s population.

Pope Francis also makes other appeals concerning religious fundamentalism; the consequences of the wars that lead to the present refugee crisis and the plight of thousands of people surviving without the minimum human conditions; emigration in the search for better living conditions; the trafficking of people and the equality and dignity of people’s conditions and their rights, as well as social inclusiveness, urging us to be responsible when taking decisions that may influence lives of many thousands of people.

Your Excellencies
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The humanistic side of Christianity and Catholicism has always been part of our growth. Our history shows how the Catholic Church has played such a vital role in the construction of our identity, in our upbringing and education as individuals and in our national liberation process.

We share the principles of dialogue, peace and solidarity between peoples. These are the values and principles advocated by Catholicism, which meet the aspirations of the people of Timor-Leste and on which rest our essence and our ethics.

Indeed, our very Constitution acknowledges the importance of the role played by Catholicism in Timor-Leste. Furthermore, the recent Agreement signed with the Holy See has strengthened the Catholic Church's guidance in several social areas, thereby contributing both to our continuous upbringing as individuals and to our national development as a people and as a nation.

Every word, deed and gesture by Pope Francis over the last three years have created more union, have brought people closer together rather than apart, have changed attitudes, have given a new dynamic to the Catholic Church and have made this pontificate more global, with a special focus on poverty, peace, the people and the planet.

As you are aware, not too long ago I have represented the Government and the people of Timor-Leste in a meeting with His Holiness Pope Francis and His Eminence Cardinal Pietro Parolin.

I would like to seize this moment to reiterate the request to the Apostolic Nuncio for Timor-Leste to convey to the Holy See our thanks for the special attention shown to the Timorese delegation – particularly the honour of taking part in the morning mass presided over by Pope Francis at the Saint Martha House Chapel, the hearing with His Holiness and the comforting words by Pope Francis in favour of dialogue, peace and development in our country.

I also want to reaffirm to Monsignor Joseph Marino that Timor-Leste remains willing to continue working together with the Church towards the development of the present and future generations of Timorese men and women.

I conclude by reiterating the wishes I have conveyed personally to His Holiness before, namely for a long life and a long papacy. May the bridges Pope Francis has built never come down, and may the doors he has opened never close.

Thank you very much.

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