



The long-awaited Papal visit to Kenya was worth the preparation and the wait as thousands thronged to listen and some at least to see the Holy Father.

Thousands travelled from vast parts of the country to the capital city, Nairobi where the Pope was expected to give his speeches. All went well and not even the rain could disrupt these events. This had been a third time that Kenyans welcomed a Pope with first being St. John Paul II in 1985, and a second time in 1995.

A renewal of Christian vigor

The Papal visit couldn't be timelier, at a time when the Christian and especially the catholic faith has been under criticism from the government and other denominations on its stand on health and spiritual issues. The visit by the Holy Father strengthen the vigor of many catholic faithful

and clergy as well.

Church, youths and society

Kenyans cheered and waved to the Pope who waved them back from his small Honda, a car which baffled and amused many as well. His motorcade was followed by luxurious cars of Kenyan officials. On his first address at the State House in Nairobi, the Pope majored on the importance of encouraging, inspiring, nurturing and involving the youths in solving and contributing towards national problems and international crisis as well in regards to environmental issues. He also spoke against unjust distribution of resources, marginalization of the poor and neglect of the youths. Later on, addressing the youths at Kasarani, he emphasized on the need for unity, to fight against tribalism, corruption, drugs and radicalization. He also spoke of the need for dialogue as a means to enhance unity

The church and society

The visit of the Holy Father was more than a catholic visit as it touched on the role of the church in the society. The pope spoke of peace and reconciliation as part of the church's duty to help deal with tribalism and inter-religious differences. He also spoke of the mission of religious in a meeting with religious leaders and seminarians at St. Mary's schools saying "... You help to build the spiritual and moral life of society on the strong foundations of honesty, justice, solidarity and the responsible use of freedom." Still emphasizing the role of the church to the society.

The Pope speaking in Spanish, Spoke on vocation and sincerity of vocation. He urged the clergy to be sincere in promoting vocation, a message seemed to have been targeted at vocational directors, he urged them to admit new people to religious life, and it should be done in an orthodox way. The Pope challenged the clergy to keep their vocation pure by avoiding interest based on power and financial gains.

Reaffirmation of faith

The visit of the Pope left a great impact on Christian youths nationwide and a challenge to the catholic youths as well. He challenged the youth to lead a prayerful life, giving a testimony of his experience of a rosary and a booklet on the way of the cross. He challenged the leaders and the youths towards dialogue "... Dialogue is not an optional or a luxury, but something essential" he said. In his speech again he urged the youths to build their lives on firm foundations of God's word.

**From Information Desk;
Dominican Youth Movement - Kenya.**