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Video Message of the Holy Father on the occasion of the presentation of the volume on the Congolese Rite of the celebration of Mass

The following is the text of the video message sent by the Holy Father to the participants in the presentation of the volume on the Congolese Rite of the celebration of Mass, edited by the Vatican Publishing House:

Video Message of the Holy Father

I rejoice that I am able to connect with you for this event, which is so important for the Church in Africa. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to join this event of the presentation of the volume on the Congolese Rite of the celebration of Mass. One year after the celebration of the Mass at which I presided in Saint Peter's Basilica, with the Congolese Rite, the Vatican Library has published a volume on the event. The book is edited by Sister Rita Mboshu Kongo and has as its subtitle "A promising rite for other cultures". This subtitle clearly indicates the fundamental reason behind this publication: a book that is the testimony of a celebration lived with faith and joy. The spiritual and ecclesial significance and the pastoral purpose of the Eucharistic celebration in the Congolese Rite were at the basis of the book. The principles of the need for scientific study, adaptation and active participation in the Liturgy, strongly desired by the Council, guided the authors of this volume. As the first and only inculturated rite of the Latin Church approved after the Second Vatican Council, the experience of the Congolese Rite of the celebration of Mass may serve as an example and model for other cultures. One of the main contributions of the Second Vatican Council was indeed to propose norms for adaptation to the character and traditions of various peoples. I urge you - as Saint John Paul II said to the Bishops of Congo on an *ad limina Apostolorum* visit on 23 April 1988 - to commit yourselves in the same way to the whole ritual of the Sacraments and the sacramentals that you have in mind to complete this Rite.

Let us remember what was explicitly stated in *Querida Amazonia* - to "take up into the liturgy many elements proper to the experience of indigenous peoples in their contact with nature, and respect native forms of expression in song, dance, rituals, gestures and symbols. The Second Vatican Council called for this effort to inculturate the liturgy among indigenous peoples; over fifty years have passed and we still have far to go along these lines" (82).

The Congolese Rite of the Eucharistic celebration values the various languages, colours, and movements of the body that interact, appealing to all the dimensions of the personality of the faithful, always taking into account the specific values of each people.

This publication, dear brothers and sisters, reminds us that the true protagonist of the Congolese Rite is the People of God who sing to and praise God, the God of Jesus Christ, who has saved us.