



*Joint Message for the 10th anniversary
of the Independence of South Sudan*

Your Excellencies,

On this day marking ten years since South Sudan's Independence, we send you our cordial good wishes, conscious that this anniversary calls to mind your past struggles and points with hope to the future. Your nation is blessed with immense potential, and we encourage you to make even greater efforts to enable your people to enjoy the full fruits of independence.

When we last wrote to you at Christmas, we prayed that you might experience greater trust among yourselves and be more generous in service to your people. Since then, we have been glad to see some small progress. Sadly, your people continue to live in fear and uncertainty, and lack confidence that their nation can indeed deliver the 'justice, liberty and prosperity' celebrated in your national anthem. Much more needs to be done in South Sudan to shape a nation that reflects God's kingdom, in which the dignity of all is respected and all are reconciled (cf *2 Corinthians*, 5). This may require personal sacrifice from you as leaders – Christ's own example of leadership shows this powerfully – and today we wish you to know that we stand alongside you as you look to the future and seek to discern afresh how best to serve all the people of South Sudan.

We recall with joy and thanksgiving the historic meeting of the political and religious leaders of South Sudan at the Vatican in 2019 and the weighty promises made on that occasion. We pray that those promises will shape your actions, so that it will become possible for us to visit and celebrate with you and your people in person, honouring your contributions to a nation that fulfils the hopes of 9 July 2011. In the meantime, we invoke upon you and all in South Sudan God's blessings of fraternity and peace.

Franciscus

+ Jacob Gai

Jim Wallace

Their Excellencies
The Political Leaders of South Sudan