



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC PILGRIMAGE TO COLOMBIA

WELCOME CEREMONY

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

Vigie Airport of Castries - Saint Lucia Island

Monday, 7 July 1986

*Your Excellency the Governor-General,
Mr Prime Minister,
Archbishop Felix,
Distinguished members of the Government,
Dear people of Saint Lucia,*

1. I am very happy to be here in your beloved country. For a long time I have wanted to pay you a visit, and now I thank God for the joy I experience in fulfilling this desire.

Thank you, Your Excellency, for your kind words of welcome. I am grateful to you for making me feel so much at home. As I begin this visit, I greet most cordially all of you who have come to receive me in such a warm and friendly manner. And I wish to extend my personal greetings to all the people of this land. I hope that you will see in my visit a clear expression of the esteem and respect that I have for you all, as well as a symbol of the special pastoral love which I have for my brothers and sisters of the Catholic faith.

2. I am aware that the Catholic Church has contributed in a very significant way to the development of Saint Lucia. By her firm commitment to the welfare of your nation, particularly in the field of education, and by her witness to the inalienable dignity and equality of every human person, she has helped people to develop and use their personal gifts and capacities and to exercise with responsibility their roles in society. She has done this out of a genuine spirit of fraternal love, and in effective collaboration with other Christians and with all men and women of good will. I hope that this pastoral visit will strengthen my brothers and sisters in the Church to

continue along this path and to make even greater progress for the well-being of all.

3. As you know, the United Nations Organization has declared 1986 the International Year of Peace. I heartily welcome this initiative, since the Church has always sought to be a servant of peace and reconciliation in the world. This has become increasingly important in our technological age when the weapons of destruction far surpass anything ever imagined in times past and when people of good will everywhere feel the need for greater harmony and fraternal collaboration.

I know that as a nation you are committed to this lofty goal. Your own history, once marked by repeated struggles between different Governments, has without a doubt made even more firm your commitment and determination in this regard. You are well aware of the need to seek peaceful solutions to conflicts and to Promote dialogue and trust between peoples. This is well expressed in your National Anthem, where we find the words:

"Gone the days when strife and discord
Dimmed her childrens' ton and rest,
Dawns at last a brighter day,
Stretches out a glad new way".

As you continue to build a "glad new way" in Saint Lucia, may your efforts contribute to the harmony and cooperation of all peoples within the international community.

4. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God". These words of our Lord Jesus Christ give us immense encouragement and hope. They remind us what a blessing it is to do the will of God and to work for peace and justice in the world. May you always be worthy of being called children of God. And may this pastoral visit help to bring joy and hope to all the people of Saint Lucia. God bless you all.

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